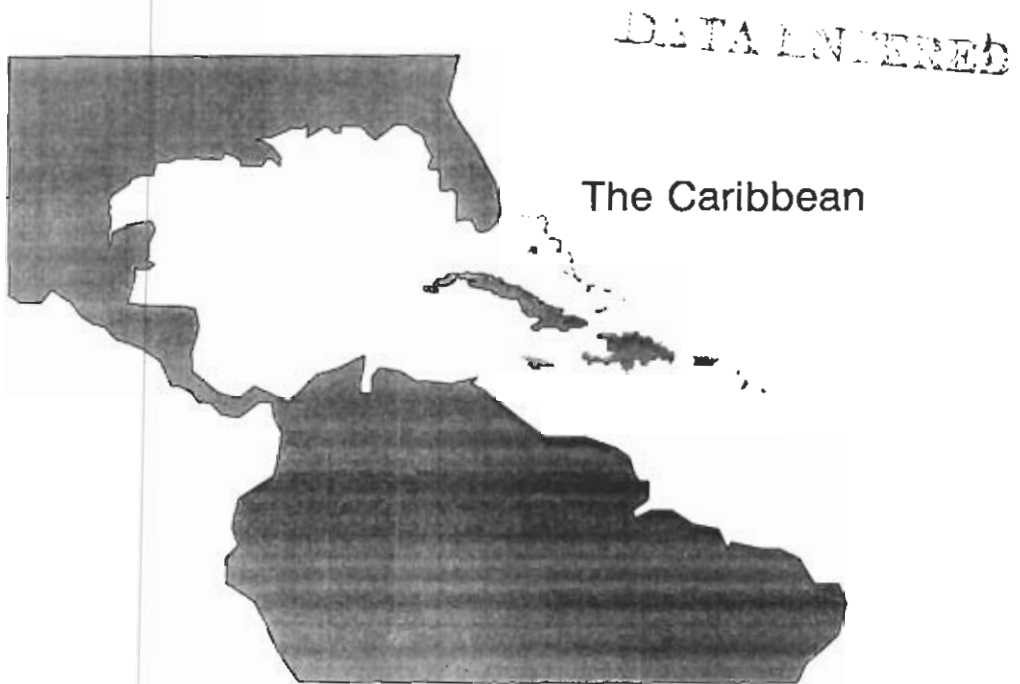


(3)

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS AND DA'WAH ORGANIZATIONS IN ENGLISH SPEAKING TERRITORIES OF THE CARIBBEAN



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INTRODUCTION

Dawah, to call humanity to Allah is an individual as well as a collective obligation. Dawah is so central and important to Islam that the Qur'an declares enjoining of virtue and stopping from evil as the mission of the Muslim Ummah¹.

The appearance and development of many Da'wah organizations and institutions in almost every part of the Muslim majority countries and Muslim minorities is a response to these commandments of Allah (SWT). These institutions and organizations are involved at varying level in propagation of Islamic message to Muslims and non-Muslims employing methods and techniques they have derived in the light of their understanding of Islam.

Presently the Muslims in the Caribbean number around five hundred thousands. They live in more than twenty countries of the region. Wherever they exist, they have established Islamic institutions and founded organizations which operate either to maintain the Islamic identity of the Muslim populace or strive to propagate Islamic message to bring more people to the fold of Islam. Sometimes, Da'wah organizations perform both these jobs together without making any distinction between the two. In the terms of Larry Poston, these organizations practice both the approaches i.e. offensive-activist and defensive pacifist. "Offensive-activist" approach is to do active Da'wah work to increase converts to Islam while "pacifist-defensive" approach is to build Islamic institutions to maintain and sustain the "Islamicity" of the Muslim population².

Islamic history of the Caribbean is slowly and gradually becoming a topic of critical importance to the indigenous researchers of the region. This area has been neglected in Muslim minority research. Little is known about these countries except that these are tourist resorts.

¹ Al Qur'an : 3:104, 2:143, 3:110 and 22:41.

² Larry Poston, Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1992), pp.31-45.

The Caribbean islands form a 1500 mile long archipelago, the Antilles, separating the Caribbean Sea from the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The Greater Antilles are the large western islands of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. To the east and south lie the smaller lesser Antilles including the northern lee ward and southern wind ward groups and islands off Venezuela. The Antilles and neighbouring Bahamas comprise the West Indies. These more than twenty countries occupy about 92,000 sq.miles, less than half the area of central America. The Pacific ocean lies west of the Caribbean region and central America, while the open Atlantic Ocean lies east. To the north stretches the Gulf of Mexico and the coastline of the United States of America and directly south lies South America³.

The majority of Caribbean people speak Spanish, notably in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. The official language in the U.S. Virgin Island, Jamaica, Trinidad, Bermuda, Belize, Barbados, Grenada and Guyana is English. Dutch is officially spoken respectively in the French and Dutch Antilles. There are also many local tongues especially Afro-Caribbean forms collectively called Creole or Patois⁴.

Most of the available material is based on the personal observations, reports of the visits of the area and some conference papers. Recently the University of the West Indies, especially the St. Augustine Campus has encouraged some researchers to take up some research assignments on the history of Islam and Muslims in Trinidad. Some of these researchers have come up with optimum input in terms of qualitative research but still more work is required to be done on the historical aspect.

This researcher has visited the Caribbean twice, in 1991 and 1994-95 and stayed there for a total period of three months in Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Antigua, Barbados, Grenada and Jamaica. These visits were useful with respect to gaining knowledge about these Muslims.

³. The Atlas of Central America and the Caribbean The Diagram Group, n.d. pp. 12-14.

⁴. Ibid, pp. 66-67.

I have met the Muslim leadership of the Caribbean, discussed with them issues related to the Muslims' life and more importantly the evolution of Islamic institutions and Da'wah organizations in the regional context. The Muslim leaders were, as a whole cooperative and magnanimous. Information gained during interviews were also compared with already available material.

It looks pertinent to mention the sources of information mostly referred to in this work. Eric William's book From Columbus to Castro: the History of the Caribbean - 1492 - 1969 was the main source on the periods of slavery and indentureship. A.H. Quick's booklet Deeper Roots: Muslims in the Caribbean before Columbus to the Present was used as a source material for understanding the history of Islam in the Caribbean before Columbus.

The article of Dr. Ali Kettani entitled, "Muslims in the Caribbean" to be printed in the book under press, Muslims in the American Continent, edited by Dr. Ali Kettani and A.M.M' Bow was a big source of information on the Muslim communities of Trinidad and Barbados. Besides this, frequent exchange of views took place with Dr. Ali Kettani during 1994-95 in Guyana and Islamabad about various aspects of the Caribbean Muslims.

The Caribbean Muslim Standard, a journal brought out by the Islamic Investments Limited, Trinidad was consulted for documentation of the historical events and for constructing a useful profile of the Islamic organizations in Trinidad. The material on two major areas of the region are Trinidad and Guyana on which comparatively sufficient material was available, in the form of situation reports, organization's files, documents, pamphlets and brochures. These two countries have also a considerable ratio of Muslims. Other Muslim communities which were studied are: Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Belize, Bermuda, Bahamas, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands and Montserrat.

Study of the Muslim Communities of Surinam, French Guyana, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guadelupe, Curacao and Martinique is outside the scope of this research because of their being non-English speaking countries.

This study was grounded on the hypothesis that Islamic institutions and Da'wah organizations have played a significant role in maintaining the Islamic ambience of the Caribbean Muslim Communities. Wherever the Islamic consciousness is weak, it is mainly due to dormancy of the Islamic institutions.

Islamic institutions in this research, are considered to be the bodies which stand for introduction and propagation of Islamic beliefs, objectives and teachings while Da'wah organizations are considered to be those which are devoted to inviting Muslims and non-Muslims to the way of Allah (SWT).

To introduce Islam to its addressees and to maintain Islamic presence, study of the role of institutions like Masjid, madrassah, maktab, Islamic Centres, part time schools, full time schools, colleges, funeral services, academies, kindergartens, hospitals, clinics, nutrition and dietary centres, T.V. and radio stations, audiovisual centres, *jamaats*, *ustads*, *Shaikhs*, *imams*, etc. is very important. All these institutions and their operations in English speaking Muslim communities has been discussed and analyzed. Role of Da'wah organizations towards education and training of Muslim youth, devising techniques and methods of Da'wah, ordering priorities, involving Muslim women in Da'wah organizations, inculcating consciousness among Muslim masses for retention of their Islamic identity in a multi-religious and multi-cultural environments is also studied.

In the first chapter, an historical background of Muslim's arrival in the Caribbean and ancient Americas has been briefly discussed referring to the concept that the Muslims predate, Christopher Columbus in the Ancient Americas. The second chapter takes into account the period of slavery and the ways the African Muslims were oppressed which led to loss of their cultural and moral identity. Part of the chapter deals with struggle of Muslim slaves against the slavery in Trinidad and Jamaica. In Chapter III effort has been made to portray the situation of the Indian Muslims who had landed in the Caribbean territories as indentured labourers between 1838 and 1924. These Indian Muslims who were mostly illiterate but they retained and further transmitted to their generations whatever the Islamic teachings they had picked up from their

parents in India. They built mosques and maktabas in Trinidad and Guyana to resist Hindu influence and missionary activities of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. Chapter IV explains how the Da'wah work had started among the Muslim indentured labourers by the pioneers. In the late forties and the early fifties, Da'wah workers, from the sub-continent spent periods ranging from short visits to several years and raised the level of Islamic knowledge and awareness in the region. Chapter V deals with the socio-political and economic situation of the Muslim communities of the Caribbean with reference to overall socio-economic and political conditions of the respective country. Muslims of Trinidad and Guyana make up a significant part of their countries. While the socio-economic position of the Muslim communities in Grenada, Barbados, Jamaica or elsewhere is comparatively negligible. Only that part of the history of the particular country has been referred which is relevant to the local Muslim community or may have implications for the Muslim's life in future. Chapter VI contains an analysis of educational institutions of Muslims in Trinidad, Guyana and Barbados. Trinidadian Islamic organizations are found ahead of other Caribbean Muslim organizations in building and running the educational institutions.

Chapter VII is a study of Islamic institutions and Da'wah organizations of Trinidad which is further divided into three parts. In the first part, those institutions and organizations have been discussed which adhere to a dynamic approach and contribute towards an overall Islamic resurgence. Second part deals with the category of institutions which are apparently service oriented but play a significant role towards promotion of Islamic consciousness. Third part of the chapter focuses on the role of older or traditional organizations and their influence on the Muslim population of Trinidad.

Chapter VIII explores the institutionalization of missionary strategy in Guyana. An analysis is made of organizations and institutions established particularly for propagation of Islamic teachings and dissemination of Islamic Da'wah. Two competitive organizations of Guyana i.e. Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) and Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG) are studied in detail. A study of the institution of maktab is also annexed with this chapter.

The subject of the Chapter IX is study of the smaller Muslim communities of the Caribbean living in Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Bahamas, Bermuda, Dominica, St. Maartin, St. Lucia, British Virgin Islands, US Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Antigua and Belize.

The study of these Muslim communities include arrival of Islam, history of Islamic institutions, functioning of Islamic organizations and determining of the needs of the Muslims in the field of Da'wah.

Chapter X deals with the regional and international organizations which operate in the Caribbean. These organizations have been a motivational force behind some small local organizations. Most of these organizations are winding up their operations. The topics of discussion in Chapter IX are some specific issues which are cardinal to the life of the Caribbean Muslims. These are main areas of the needs of the Islamic work to be met to improve and upgrade the position of Islam and the Muslims. For example, need of the institution of Islamic counselling, devising of training programmes for the Muslim youth, instilling unity and co-operation among Islamic organizations.

Chapter XII presents the conclusions of the study. Role of the Islamic institutions and Da'wah organization is critically analysed and recommendations are proposed to minimize the gap between the potential and the actual performance of Islamic institutions and organizations.

The research methodology employed for this study was a combination of methodologies such as case study of communities and organizations, study of historical records, study of official files of the organization, structured and unstructured interviews, active participatory observation, and focussed sampling.

Part One

**ISLAM
IN THE CARIBBEAN
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

CHAPTER I

MUSLIM'S PRESENCE IN AMERICAS IN THE PRE-COLUMBIAN PERIOD

It is now a well researched base that Muslims had arrived in ancient Americas before Christopher Columbus. Pre-Columbian America was not an isolated part of the world as many historians have been claiming. Exchange of information and commercial items between the two worlds took place between the two worlds frequently and the Muslims were probably one of the most important contact group of people. Evidence of Muslims' presence in ancient Americas is based on a number of sculptures, oral traditions, eye witness reports, artifacts and inscriptions.

Discovery of Arabic coins near the Venezuelan Coast in the Caribbean is solid confirmation of the historical reports recorded by the Muslim historians and geographers concerning the journeys of Muslim adventurers and navigators across the Atlantic Ocean. Cyrus Gordon gives a report in "Before Columbus" describing coins found in the Southern Caribbean region:

...off the coast of Venezuela was discovered a hoard of Mediterranean coins with so many duplicates that it cannot well be a numismatist's collection but rather a supply of cash. Nearly all the coins are Roman, from the reign of Augustus to the 4th century A.D. Two of the coins however, are Arabic of the 8th century A.D. It is the latter that give us the terminus a quo (i.e. time after which) of the collection as a whole (which cannot be earlier than the latest coins in the collection). Roman coins continued in use as currency into the medieval times. A Moorish ship, perhaps from Spain or North Africa seems to have crossed the Atlantic around 800 A.D.¹

Al Mas'udi in his book Muruj-al-Dhahab in the year 956 A.D., wrote about a young man of Cordoba named Kashkhash ibn Saeed ibn Aswad who crossed the Atlantic Ocean and returned in the year 889 A.D. Al Mas'udi writes:

Some people feel that this ocean is the source of all oceans and in it there have been many strange happenings. We have reported some of them in our book Akhbar az-Zaman. Adventurers have penetrated it on the risk of their lives, some returning safely, others perishing in the attempt. One such man was an inhabitant

¹ Cyrus Gordon, Before Columbus, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1971), pp. 68-70.

of Andalusia named Khashkhash. He was a young man of Cordoba who gathered a group of young men and went on a voyage on this ocean. After a long time he returned with a fabulous booty. Every Spaniard (Andalusian) knows his story.²

Al-Sharif al Idrisi (1097-1155) the famous Arab geographer reported in his work, The geography of Al Idrisi in the 12th century, on the journey of a group of North African seamen who reached the Americas. This report clearly describes contact between the Muslim seamen and the indigenous people of the Caribbean Islands. Al-Idrisi wrote:

A group of seafarers sailed into the sea of Darkness and Fog (the Atlantic Ocean) from Lisbon in order to discover what was in it and how far it extended. They were a party of eight and they took a boat which was loaded with supplies to last them for months. They sailed for eleven days till they reached the turbulent waters with great waves and little light. They thought that they would perish so they turned their boat southward and travelled for twelve days. They finally reached an island that had people and cultivation but they were captured and chained for three days. On the fourth day a translator came speaking the Arabic language. He translated for the King and asked them about their mission. They informed him about themselves. Then they were sent back to their confinement. When the westerly wind began to blow, they were put in a canoe, blindfolded and brought to land after three days sailing. They were left on the shore with their hands tied behind their backs. When the next day came, another tribe appeared, freeing them and informing them that between them and their lands was a journey of two months.³

This report confirms the fact that the contact between the two worlds had been so developed that the native people could speak Arabic.

Though the voyages and adventures undertaken by the Muslims of Iberia and North Africa to the New World are numerous yet their details are restricted and information about their contact is limited and scant. However, the story of Mansa Musa, the world renowned ruler of Mali, is a fairly known one.

² Al Mas'udi, Muruj-al-Dhahab, Beirut, (Lebanon: Lebanese University Publishing, 1966), Vol. I, p. 138.

³ Referred to by Mukhtar al Qadi in Athar Al Madinat al Islamiyyah Fi al Hadarah al Gharbiyyah (Egypt: Pyramid Printing House; 1973), p. 335.

Mansa Musa while enroute to Makka for his famous Hajj in 1324 stayed in Cairo and informed the scholars that his predecessor had undertaken two expeditions into the Atlantic Ocean to discover its limits. Al'Umari has carried this story in his Masalik al Absar fi Mamalik ell Amar as follows:

"I asked Sultan Musa, "says Ibn Amir Hajib, "how it was that power came into his hands". 'We are', he told me, 'from a house that transmits power by heritage. The ruler who preceded me would not believe that it was impossible to discover the limits of the neighbouring sea. He wanted to find out and persisted in his plan. He had two hundred ships equipped and filled them with men, and others in the same number filled with gold, water and supplies in sufficient quantity to last for years. He told those who commanded them: 'Return only when you have reached the extremity of the ocean, or when you have exhausted your food and water.' They went away; their absence was long, before any of them returned. Finally a sole ship reappeared. We asked the captain about their adventures'. 'Prince', he replied, 'we sailed for a long time, upto the momen when we encountered in mid-ocean something like a river with a violent current. My ship was last. The others sailed on, and gradually as each one entered a place, they disappeared and did not come back. We did not know what had happened to them. As for me, I returned to where I was and did not enter the current'. "But the emperor did not believe him. He equipped two thousand vessels, a thousand for himself and the men who accompanied him and a thousand for water and supplies. He conferred power on me and left with his companions on the ocean. This was the last time that I saw him and the others, I remained absolute master of the empire."⁴

The report snows that the Mandika King of Mali made huge arrangements for the journey and was confident in the success of this adventure. This violent river in mid-ocean (as reported by the Captain of the ship) might be either the North Equatorial or the Antilles Current. The distance of both these currents from the West African Coast at that latitude would place the fleet at the doorstep of the Americas.⁵

⁴ Shihab al-Din Ibn Fadl al 'Umari, Masalik al Absar fi Mamalik el Amsar, traduit par Gaudefroy Demomboynes (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1927), pp. 74-75.

⁵ Harold Lawrence "Mandinga Voyages across the Atlantic", in African Presence in Early America, (U.S.A: Journal of African Civilizations Ltd., Ivan Van Sertima ed., 1987), p. 238.

Western scholars are uncertain about crossing the Atlantic Ocean by African people before Columbus. Two voyages across the Atlantic by Thor Heyerdahl in papyrus vessels, inscriptions found in Brazil, Peru and the United States, proven linguistic transfer into the native Amerindian Languages and numerous cultural evidences of Mandinka presence have established the contrary. The Mandinka made contact with the closest land mass to the West African Coast, Brazil. They appear to have used it as a base for exploration of the American and travelled along rivers in the dense jungles of South America and over land till they reached North America.⁶

In Panama the Mandinka had such an involvement that they are considered as inhabitants of the area.⁷

One expert on Central American Traditions wrote, "It is these that today we distinguish the indigenous people of Darian (Panama) under two names, the Mandingas and The Tul, whose difference perhaps yet recalls their distinct origin".⁸

In 1513, when Vasco Nunez de Balbou, the Spanish explorer reached Panama, he and his group identified the people of African descent. Gomara, who recorded the activities of Balboa and his party, wrote, "when Balboa entered the Province of Quareca, he found no gold, but some black slaves belonging to the King of the place. Having asked this King where he obtained these black slaves, he (Balboa) received as an answer that people of that colour lived quite near to these and that they were constantly at war with them," Gomara adds, "these Blacks were entirely like the Blacks of Guinea. As late as the mid-nineteenth century, a number of Mandinka place names still survived in Panama".⁹

The Mandinka travelled from Panama in the direction of north to Honduras. Ferdinand Columbus, the son of Christopher Columbus recorded Black people seen by his father in northern Honduras. He opined, "But the people who lived further east [of Pointe Cavinias], as

⁶ Abdullah Hakim Quick, Deeper roots: Muslims in the Caribbean Before Columbus to the Present, AICCLA Papers 1, (London; MELS, 1990), p. 14-15.

⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁸ Harold Lawrence, Op.Cit. p. 221.

⁹ Ibid., p.224.

far as Cape Gracios a Dios are almost black in color", and adds that they "pierce holes in their ears enough to insert hen's eggs."¹⁰

Blacks were reported at another group of Tegulcigalpa near the boarder of Nicaragua. They were known as "Jaras and Guabas".¹¹ These names appear to be the same as Jarra in Gambia, Diva in Senegal and Mali which represent a very old clan and territorial designation among the Mandinka - Sarakoles; and "Kaba or Kubba" a name paper associated with literacy or religious people of Islam.¹²

Another group of African Muslims of Honduras identified themselves as "Almamys" prior to arrival of Spaniards. They were related either to the African of northern Honduras as alluded to above or the Jaras of Guabas" of Tegulcigalpa. Abdullah Hakim Quick with reference to Giles writes, "a tribe of Almamys inhabited Honduras having preceded, by little, the arrival of Columbus there". He further explains that, "the title Almamys does not antedate the twelfth century of our era which is the earliest date that Black African Muslims would have been conveyed to the American Isthmus".¹³

The term "Almamy" corresponds to Al-Imamu, which in Arabic means leader or prayer leader.¹⁴

Carib people have been widely referred to in the research of the Caribbean. The very term "Caribbean" is derived from the word "Carib". Some historians have described them as the followers of the religion of Islam while others have reported conversely. However, it is difficult to establish that they were Muslim because conflicting evidences are given about them. Might be, at the time of their arrival in St. Vincent, they professed Islam but later their mixing

¹⁰ Ferdinand Columbus, The life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus, translated and annotated by Benjamin Keen (Rutgers University Press, 1959), p.234.

¹¹ C.S. Rafinesque, "Primitive Black Nations of America", Atlantic Journal and Friend of Knowledge, Vol. 1, Sept. 1832, p.86.

¹² Abdullah Hakim Quick, Op. Cit; p.17.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.18.

up with the native Indians brought in dilution and then diminution of Islamic practices. Some of their Islamic practices like complete prohibition, among them, of eating pork, suggest that a few traces of Islam have still been inherited by the progeny. The Handbook of South American Indians describes the Carib, with the following:-

the most prized possession of the [Carib] men was the Caracoli, a crescent-shaped alloy of gold and copper framed in wood, which the warriors obtained during raids upon the continental [South American] Arawak. Some of the Caracoli were small and served as ear, nose or mouth pendants; others were large enough to be worn on the chest. They were a sign of high rank, being passed down from generation to generation, and were worn only upon a ceremonial occasion and during journeys.¹⁵

It is interesting to note that some of the words which have West African and Mandinka roots (predominantly Muslims) have been found in native languages not only in the Caribbean islands but also in North America. The following are a few of the similarities which have been recorded by Harold Lawrence:

Antillean (American)	Mandinka (W.African)	English
goana, caona, guani, guanin	Ghana, Kane, Kani, Kanine, Ghanin	gold
nucay, nozay	nage, nexé (Nuh-Kuh)	metal, iron or gold jewelry
tuob, tumbaga	saba, tubab, tobauto Mansa	gold, a gold weight, a Kings title ¹⁶

Abdullah Hakim Quick refers to Leo Wiener, a renowned American historian and linguist at Harvard University who wrote a book in 1920 entitled Africa and the Discovery of America, and established in his work that Columbus was well aware of the Mandinka presence in America. In his view, West African Muslims had not only spread all over the Caribbean and

¹⁵ Julian Steward, ed. Handbook of South American Indians, 6 Vols, (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institute, Bulletin 143, 1950, Vol. 1), p.177.

¹⁶ Harold Lawrence; Op Cit; p.239.

Central and South America but they reached Canada in the far north and were trading and intermarrying with the Iroquois and Algonquin Indian nations¹⁷.

So to Wiener, Arabo-Islamic and Mande influence came to the New World in the pre-Columbian days. Christopher Columbus has himself recorded the fact that Africans were trading with the Americas. Referring to the native of his third voyage he writes:

Certain principal inhabitants of the island of Santiago came to see him, and they said that to the south-west of the island of Huego, which is one of the Cape Vendes distant 12 leagues from this, may be seen an island, and that the king Don Juan was greatly inclined to send to make discoveries to the south-west and that canoes had been found which start from the coast of Guinea and navigate to the west with merchandise¹⁸.

Columbus later recorded:

... That after he would navigate, the Lord pleasing, to the west, and from there would go to this Espanola in which route he would prove the theory of the King Juan aforesaid: and that he thought to investigate the report of the Indians of this Espanola (Haiti) who said that there had come to Espanola from the south and southeast, a black people who have the tops of their spears made of a metal which they call 'guanin' of which he had sent samples to the Sovereigns to have them assayed, when it was found that of 32 parts 18 were of gold, 6 of silver and 8 of copper¹⁹.

Leo Wiener studies the facts with the glasses of historian and a linguistic. His appraisal of the above mentioned story is as following:-

In his journal of the Third Voyage Columbus tells us that before starting for Hispaniola he was told by King Juan of Portugal that ships had come from the coast of Guinea with merchandise to the islands of the west, and so he decided first to go to Guinea "to verify on his way the opinion of King Don Juan, and he wanted to find out what the Indians of Hispaniola had told him, that there had come to it from the south and southeast Negro people, who brought those spear points made of a metal which they call guanin, of which he had sent to the king and queen for assaying, and which was found to have in thirty-copper," There is no escaping the fact that Columbus knew that the guant came from

¹⁷ Quick, p.20.

¹⁸ Thacher John Boyd, Christopher Columbus, His life, His Works, His Remains, (New York: AMS Press), 1967, p.379.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.380.

Guinea and that there had been merchants or voyagers in Hispaniola before him. This confirms the derivation of caona, guani from the Mande word for "gold"²⁰.

Early Spanish and Portuguese explorers had information about the presence of Muslims in the Americas. It has been substantiated that geographical and navigational knowledge of the Muslims was actually the basis of the European expansion. Vasco da Gama is reported to have consulted Ahmad ibn Majid on the West Coast of Africa who is credited as the author of a handbook on navigation from the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, The Persian Gulf, the Sea of Southern China and the Waters around the West Indies²¹.

Muslims ruled over Spain for more than 700 years influencing Europe culturally, educationally and economically. The Spanish soldiers had fought on land and sea to destroy the Muslims power. They felt the Islamic influence wherever they went and committed everything within their powers to convert the people to Catholicism. When Hernan Cortes, Conqueror of Mexico arrived in Yucatan, he named the area "El Cairo"²².

During the rule of Ferdinand, despite the excesses perpetrated against the Muslims, some of the Moriscos who travelled to the Americas as explorers, soldiers, and labourers, began practicing their true faith and succeeded in propagating Islam to the Indians. A series of laws were decreed to inhibit the influx of Muslims, free or enslaved, and to win back the Muslim native Indians²³.

Rafael Bazan has described it in the following passage the hostility of the Spanish hierarchy:

The King: To our officials who reside in the city of Seville at the House of trade of the Indies. We are informed that because of the increase in the price of negro slaves in Portugal and in the islands of Guinea and Cape Verde, some merchants and other persons who intend to have them for our Indies have gone or sent to buy negroes in the islands

²⁰ Leo Wiener, Africa and the Discovery of America, (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1920), Vol. 1, p.34.

²¹ Rafael Bazan, "Some notes for a History of the Relations between Latin America, the Arabs and Islam", The Muslim World, Vol. LXI, pp. 285.

²² Ibid., p.286.

²³ Quick, p.21.

of Sardinia, Majorca, Minorca and other parts of the Levant in order to send them to our Indies because they say that there they are cheaper. And because many of the negroes in those parts of the Levant are of the race (casta) of the Moors and other trade with them and (since) in a new country where at present our holy Catholic faith is being established, it is not fitting that people of this quality should go there, in account of the difficulties that could come from it. I order you that under no circumstances or by any means shall you consent to the passage to our Indies, islands or tierra firma of any negro slaves who may be from the Levant or who may have been brought up there, or of other negroes who may have been reared with Moriscos, even though they be of the race of negroes of Guinea. Made I Valladolid, July 16, 1550. Maximilano. The Queen. By order of His majesty, His Highness in his name, Juan de Samano. Seal of the Council²⁴.

King Ferdinand once ordered:

You are informed that if such Moors are by their nationality and origin Moors, and if they should teach Muslim doctrines, or wage war against you or the Indians or who may have adopted the Muslim religion you shall not make slaves by any means whatsoever. On the contrary you shall try to convert them or persuade them by good and legitimate means to accept our holy Catholic faith²⁵.

Conclusion:

In this article, an attempt has been made to trace the Muslim's presence in Americas before the advent of Christopher Columbus. To most of the literate world, the first contact the Caribbean region had with the outside world was on 11th of October, 1492. Very little is mentioned about the Muslim's presence till the nineteenth century when the indentured labour from India was introduced on the end of the slavery. In actuality, the history of Islam and Muslims in the Caribbean stretches back over one thousand years, pre-dating European contact by over six centuries. Facts reveal that Muslims have had a larger and intimate relationship with this region.

The first phase of the extensive period of history opens into another crucial phase, the period of slavery in which African Muslims underwent exploitation, humiliation and deprivation by the European nations. The period of slavery is dealt with in the next chapter.

²⁴ Rafael Bazan, Loc. Cit. Muslim Immigration to Spanish America. pp.183, 184.

²⁵ Ibid., p.177.

CHAPTER II

MUSLIM'S STRUGGLE AGAINST SLAVERY

In Classical Roman Law, slavery was defined as an institution "whereby someone is subject to the power of another contrary to nature".¹

The Trauma of enslavement, often entailing great physical sufferage as well as severe psychological damage generates a chain reaction in the behaviour of both the slaves and their masters, in which the potential or actual use of naked force was a permanent factor. Their behaviour patterns and their underlying psychology were reinforced by the slaves' lack of essential humanities of kin and community. Free sexual access to slaves marks them off from all other persons as much as their juridical classification as property. Not all the societies went as far as the Caribbean South America in the absolute denial to the slaves of a *de facto* family of his own. Their slavery was complete; they lost all control not only over their productive activity but also over their reproduction. Prejudice was certainly an important factor in the Southern American colonies where they decreed, in the 1660 that henceforth all Negroes, but no whites, who were imported should be slaves and not identified servants.²

These were Spanish who brought to the New World an economic and social heritage in which slavery and serfdom were constituent elements. The thirteenth century code of *Las Siete Partidas*, rooted in the ancient Code of Justinian, recognized slavery as an integral part of the Spanish economy. It divided men into three categories - free men, slaves and freed slaves. Christopher Columbus had sailed to Guinea where he had acquired a personal experience of the slave trade. His protracted stay in Portugal and his year in Spain had given him a familiarity with slavery, especially with Negro Slavery. He instituted both the experiences in the West Indies.

¹ International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, (New York: The Macmillan Company & Tree Press, 1972), Reprint edition, Vol. 13-14, P.307.

² Ibid., p.309.

After his encounter with the native Indians, Columbus recorded in his Journal:

"They should be good servants and intelligent, for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them".³

Columbus considered Indians (native) as timid and unwarlike. He was of the opinion that, with the small force at his disposal, he could overrun all the islands without opposition. There was some doubt in his mind, as to whether they should be kept in captivity in the West Indies or transported to Castile (Spain). He decided to take a few Indians to Spain to teach them the language. With the passage of time, Columbus became more adamant to the view that the real riches of the West Indies lay in its Indian population. He found in the Cannibalism of the Carib, a pretext for their enslavement. He described them as 'a wild people fit for any work, well proportioned, and very intelligent ---- better than any other kind of slaves'.⁴

On his third voyage in 1498, he shipped 600 Indians back to Spain. The slave trade thus began in the Caribbean as outward and not inward cargoes, taking the form of Indians transported from the West Indies to Spain rather than of Negroes transported from West Africa to the Caribbean. This experience could not work longer for a variety of reasons including the protest of Spanish people against the excesses perpetrated against the Indians. The Spanish masters planned to replace the Indians with white labour. Four expedients were available, as far as white labour was concerned. The first was to transport convict labour or the criminals to the Caribbean. The second was to send white slaves especially the white Christian female slaves to the married to be Colonials, as they would be preferable to Indian women.⁵

The third source of immigrant labour was foreigners. Though Columbus had recommended to the Sovereigns to ban the entry of any foreigner into the West Indies, making a reservation in favour of Catholics. But, with the accession of the Emperor Charles V in 1519, Spain became a part of a heterogeneous empire which included Italians, Fleming and Germans.

³ Quoted by Eric Williams in From Columbus to Castro, the History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1971) 2nd edition, P.31.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Williams, Eric. *op.cit*; p.38.

In 1526, the Emperor permitted all his subjects to go to the Caribbean, since it was reasonable after such vast territories had been discovered that they should be peopled with Christians.

Convicts, white slaves and foreigners having proved inadequate to the needs, the only alternative left for the Spanish Government was to relax the restrictions against Spaniards. However, this white labour too, failed to field the required output contrary to expectations attached to them. It proved to be difficult for the Spanish Government to fulfil the demand of labour to all the settlements in the New World like Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Ecuador, Venezuela, Yakertan and Florida.

The Spaniards did not have far to look. The Negro slave trade, in the hands of the Portuguese, was more than half a century old when the sixteenth century began, and the Spaniards were already accustomed to purchase Negro slaves in the Portuguese slave markets. The Portuguese monopoly of the Guinea trade was a severe handicap to Spain. For this reason, and also because of the constant anxiety to keep the colonies immune from heresy, the Spanish Government turned to the Negro slaves in Spain, who had been converted to Catholicism. The Negro slave trade was initiated by the King on September 3, 1501, in a letter to the Governor of Hispaniola, in which he said: 'In view of our earnest desire for the conversion of the Indians to our Holy Catholic Faith, and seeing that, if persons suspect in the Faith went their, such conversion might be impeded, we cannot consent to the immigration of Moors, heretics, Jews, re-converts, or persons newly converted to our Holy Faith, unless they are Negro or other slaves who have been born in the power of Christians who are our subjects and nationals and carry our express permission.' The Spanish slave trade thus began as a trade not from West Africa to the West Indies, but from Spain, and it thus excluded all non-Christian slaves and Christian slaves born in the power of non-Spaniards.

But there were simply not enough Negro slaves born in the power of Christian Spaniards. The planters and miners in the colonies gave economics priority over religion, and desired a Negro slave trade from Guinea, freed from its religious integument; they regarded the Negroes, as Columbus had regarded the Indians, as having no religion, and, therefore, free from the taint of idolatry or heresy.

For about 400 years, people were bought and sold, tricked and captured, and transported across the Atlantic by the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers. Throughout this brutal period of

greed and atrocity, the African Continent was the chief victim of exploitation. Millions of African people were taken from the shores of West and Central Africa and transported west. This Negro slave trade in the eighteenth century constituted one of the greatest migrations in recorded history. Its volume is indicated in the following table, prepared from various statistics that are available:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Colony</u>	<u>Importation</u>	<u>Average Importation per year</u>
1700-1786	Jamaica	610,000	7,000
1708-1735 & 1747-1766	Barbados	148,821	3,100
1680-1776	Saint-Domingue	800,000	8,247
1720-1729	Antigua	12,278	1,362
1721-1730	St. Kitts	10,358	1,035
1721-1729	Montserrat	3,210	357
1721-1726	Nevis	1,267	253
1767-1773	Dominica	19,194	2,742
1763-1789	Cuba	30,875	1,143
1700-1754	Danish Islands	11,750	214 ⁶

Africans from almost every tribe and class in the regions of slave raiding were lying side by side in the slave ships - Ashanti, Coromanti, Yoruba, Ibos, Fon, Wolof and others. It is also proven that among the slaves were Muslims - Mandinka, Fula, Susa, Ashanti, Hausa and others.

As early as the tenth and eleventh century, Islam had made an important impact in West and Central Africa. The Islamic presence was established by merchants, missionaries and teachers. Colonies of Arab merchants and traders allied with local political elites and had inspired them to accept Islam. Thus, between the tenth and the eighteenth centuries, a succession of Sudanic Kingdoms - Ghana, Mali, Kanem, Songhay, Hansaland, and Dogomba were

⁶ Eric Williams, *Op.cit*; p.145.

converted or organized under the banner of Islam. Mandinka, Fula, Susa, Ashanti, Hausa and other nations had become part of the Dar-al-Islam.⁷

Within this situation, in some cases the chiefs remained pagans but employed Muslims as functionaries in various capacities in the state. In other instances the chiefs accepted Islam but maintained a cultural orientation which synthesized Islamic rituals and festivals with pagan customs and ceremonies. In cases such as Kano, Katsina, Takrur and Bornu, the Chiefs became Muslims and active patrons of Muslim religious life. These Muslim regimes favoured the work of Islamic scholars, ulama and missionaries who led prayers, guided in applying Shariah in daily life and established a sort of Islamic culture.

Arabic thus became important not only for teaching Islam but for communications and trade. Bornu, Kano and Timbuktu became centres of Islamic scholarship, imparting Quranic, Hadith, and Fiqh studies, supplemented by studies in linguistics, history, mathematics and astronomy. These centres had produced Arabic texts as early as the fourteenth century and were visited by North African and Egyptian scholars.⁸

In fact, Islam had been the religion of many of the rulers and the ruled of West and Central Africa long before the start of Atlantic Trade. This supports the argument that a good proportion of the millions of Africans forcibly brought to the West Indies were Muslims. Christianity was foreign to most of those removed from Africa. Besides Islam, traditional African religions were commonly practiced.

Historical accounts and interviews of African slaves further leave no doubt that a sizeable number of those carried the slave ships to the sugar plantation of the British West Indies were followers of Islam. Accounts also suggest that many of the African slaves brought to Jamaica belonged to the Ashanti Empire.⁹

⁷ Ira M. Lapidus, A History of Islamic Societies, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.489-499

⁸ Ira M. Lapidus, p. 499.

⁹ Sultana Afroz, "Unsung Slaves: Islam in Plantation Jamaica, Paper presented at the twenty fifth conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians, (Uni. of West Indies., Mona, Jamaica, March 31, 1993), p.3.

It is very likely that many of these from Ashanti were captives or enslaved during the campaigns undertaken by the non-Muslim Ashanti government against the north eastern Muslim dominated provinces whose rulers were known for their proclivity for Islam.¹⁰

Mrs. A. Carmichael, a wealthy English traveller who resided in the British West Indies for some time and interviewed many Mandinka slaves is of the opinion that many of them were Muslims. In her work running into two volumes entitled "The Domestic Manners and the Social Conditions of the White, Coloured and Negro Population of the West Indies", she wrote:

It is a commonly received opinion in Britain, that Negroes are professed idolaters----- There is not a trace of idol worship among them ----- I am convinced there is not a negro, old or young who could not tell that one God made the world and created mankind, and that He is all powerful and all seeing.¹¹

A researcher of the Caribbean history realizes that much work is left to be done in collecting the eye witness reports, diaries and artifacts concerning African Muslim presence in the slavery period. However, available sources reveal a strong tradition of literacy and resistance on the part of the Muslim slaves. In 1531, the Spanish declared the Wolof were " haughty, disobedient, rebellious and incorrigible".¹²

Rigorous laws were decreed by the colonizers to suppress the will of the slaves, control their activities and convert them to Christianity.

¹⁰ Philip D. Curtin (ed.) Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans From the Era of the Slave Trade, (The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1968), p.106.

¹¹ Mrs. A. Carmichael, The Domestic Manners and the Social Conditions of the White, Coloured and Negro Population of the West Indies, vol. 11, (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Co., 1833), pp.251-2.

¹² Clyde Ahmad Winters, "Afro American Muslims - from Slavery to Freedom", Al Itislahah, October, November 1976, P.190.

Following are some of the rules from the Code Noir, or Black Code, promulgated in March 1685 and entitled ' Ordinance concerning the discipline of the Church, and the condition of the Slaves in the West Indian Colonies':

1. A slave who ran away for one month was to have his ears cut off and be branded on the shoulder for the first offence, branded on the other shoulder for the second offence and put to death for the third offence.
2. Slaves could not legally possess property or legally make contracts.
3. Slaves could not fill any office or agency. Their evidence in court could only be used to enable the judge to understand the evidence of others, and not as proof. Slaves could be prosecuted criminally as in the case of freemen.
4. As personal property, slaves could be sold in debt or bequeathed in inheritance.
5. All slaves in the islands were to be baptised and instructed in the Catholic religion. Sundays and holidays of the church were to be observed.
6. Slaves were forbidden to carry arms or large sticks, and nocturnal assemblies of slaves of different owners were prohibited under any pretext such as weddings. The penalty was flogging and branding for the first offence, and even death for frequent repetition of the offence.¹³

The Code paid particular attention to the proneness of the slaves to run away. Absenteeism for one month was punished by cutting off the ears and branding on one shoulder. Absenteeism for the second time in one month was punished by cutting off the buttocks and branding on the other shoulder. For running away the third time, the punishment was death.¹⁴

Notwithstanding the inhuman and coercive slavery system in the Americas and the forced separation from the Muslim lands and culture, there are evidences about Muslim slaves sustaining a form of their faith, inciting slave revolts and in some cases reclaiming their freedom

¹³ Eric Williams, pp. 183-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

and returning to their homeland. The leading force among the Muslim Africa slaves were the Mandinka known in the Americas as Mandingo.¹⁵

Mrs. Carmichael whose impression about the Negroes are alluded to in previous pages has interviewed scores of slaves mainly Ibo and Mandingo. She wrote:

There must, I am convinced, be old Africans, who cannot have forgotten such things as the worship of idols, but people seem not to be aware, that in Africa very many Negro nations are not idolaters, but Mahometans: this was a subject which I searched into minutely, and I never found one native African who did not positively deny all knowledge of such a thing as idol worship. At the same time I do not doubt, that even if they did remember it, they might have denied it; because native Africans do not at all like it to be supposed that they retain the customs of their country and consider themselves wonderfully civilized by their being transplanted from Africa to the West Indies.... I never found any who knew the name of Mahomet, but probably if I had known the name in Mandingo, I might have been able to make them understand me better. Several native Africans have told me, that in their country "they went every fourth day to church to say prayers to one very great Massa (Master) whom the great God sent down into the world a long time back to teach people to be very good. The great Massa never came to Africa, but he stop in the country far off from them, where the sun rise. These and similar stories I have received from native Africans. They seemed indignant at the idea that they should be supposed capable of idol worship...¹⁶

Byran Edwards, author of a well-known work on the history of the British West Indies, considered Muslim slaves (especially the Mandingos) to be a sizeable proportion of those taken to the British islands. One such example of a Muslim slave reads as follows:

An old and faithful Mandingo servant, who stands at my elbow while I write this relates... of his national customs and manners he remembers but little, being at the time of his captivity, but a youth. He relates, that the natives practise circumcision, and that he himself has undergone that operation; and he has not forgot the morning and evening prayer which his father taught him. In proof of this assertion, he chants, in an audible and shrill tone, a sentence that I conceive to be part of the Al Koran, La illa, ill illa; (i.e. La ilaha illa Allah, there is no god but Allah) which he says they sing aloud at the first appearance of the new moon. He relates, moreover, that in his own country Friday was constantly made a strict fasting. It was almost a sin, he observes, on that day, to swallow his spittle; such is his expression.

¹⁵ Abdullah Hakim Quick, p. 25.

¹⁶ Mrs. A. Carmichael, Op. cit; pp. 251-252.

Edwards further elaborates:

Besides this man, I had once another Mandingo servant who could write, with great beauty and exactness, the Arabic alphabet and some passages from Al Koran. Whether his learning extended any further I had no opportunity of being informed, as he died soon after he came into my possession.¹⁷

In Jamaica, special magistrate Robert R. Madden, one of six special magistrates sent to the island in 1833 by the British Government in order to observe the state of the country in nine months and gain experience as general magistrate, recorded not only the presence of a considerable amount of Muslims in Jamaica, but also found them to be generally literate, independent and rebellious. In his letter to J.F. Savory, Esq., Jamaica, St. Andrews, March 30, 1835, Madden included the following narrative in his extraordinary account:

I had a visit one Sunday morning very lately, from three, Mandingo Negroes, natives of Africa. They could all read and write Arabic; and one of them showed me a Koran written from memory by himself ___ but written, he assured me, before he became a Christian. I had my doubts on this point. One of them, Benjamin Cockrane, a free Negro who practiced with no little success as a doctor in Kingston, was in the habit of coming to me on Sundays... His history is that of hundreds of others in Jamaica... Cockrane says his father was a chief in the Mandingo country. He was sent to school, but was too idle a boy to become a scholar. Plenty of books in the Mandingo country, but not much schools. The great schools are farther up the country. He began to learn to be a doctor in Mandingo country... I (Madden) have not time to give you an account of his religious opinion: but though very singular, they were expressed with infinitely more energy and eloquence than his sentiments on other subjects. He professed to be an occasional follower of one of the sectarian ministers here, and so did each of his two friends. I had my doubts thereupon. I expressed them to my wife, who was present on this occasion, and told her to prepare for a demonstration of Mahometanism. I took up a book as if by accident, and commended repeating the well known Mussulman Salaam to the Prophet, Allah Illah Mahmmed rasul allah; In an instant, I had a Mussulman trio, long and loud: my Negro Neophytes were chanting their names with irrepressible fervour, and Mr. Benjamin Cockrane I thought, would have inflicted the whole of "the perspicuous book" of Islam on

¹⁷ Byran Edwards, The History of Civil and Commercial of the British West Indies 1819, (AMS Press Inc., 1966). pp.71-72.

me, if I had not taken advantage of the opportunity for giving him and his companions a reproof for pretending to be that which they were not".¹⁸

The account reveals that probably hundreds of African slaves had been brought in chains from West Africa were forced to observe the practices of their master's religions under rigidly specified conditions.

In actuality, however, many of them remained faithful to their religion and practiced Islam privately amongst themselves. The recitation of La Ilaha Illallahu Muhammad ur Rasoolullah, i.e. that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah shows the strong faith in Islam. The mere fact of writing the Holy Qur'an in Arabic from memory demonstrates a strong Islamic background.

Magistrate Madden had discovered that scores of African slaves had been forced to adopt Christian names but remained faithful to their religion Islam and did not forget their history. Madden kept himself in contact with the Muslims. The following letter written to Madden bears proof of the fact that Muslims had concealed their Islam for obvious reasons.

To Doctor Madden, Esq.,
Kingston
Nov. 1, 1834

".....You inquired from me, some time back my name that I had given me on the coast of Africa, and I told you that it was Anna Moosa, which in the English is Moses. The name that I had furthermore given as a warrior, was Gorah Condran. My father was one of the lords in the Carsoe nation. My nation, and the Arabic, are all one. The King of Carsoe nation was Demba Saga-his daughter was married to Arabic.

I remain, honoured Sir,

Yours respectfully- Benjamin Cockrane.¹⁹

Thousands of slaves have been reported to have gone through the process of baptism. However, the practice of Christianity by a majority of the African Muslims were only

¹⁸ R.R. Madden, A Twelve Months Residence in the West Indies During the Transition from Slavery to Apprenticeship, (Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1835), pp. 99-101.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.102.

pretentious to avoid punishments from the masters and Clergy. On the other hand, for many who came from respected and honourable families, often pretentious conversion was a token, at least, of partial acceptance. The ostentatious acceptance of Christianity entailed social respect in addition to personality change. The Church, under its own conditions often determined the divine worship of the slaves. The masters were frequently required by the Church to bring their slaves to teach them Christianity. Very often, Church policies preferred conversion to manumission or emancipation of slaves. The Anglican church played important role in baptizing the African slaves. Under changing circumstances new colonial laws encouraged slave baptism, church marriages, Christian lessons and directives, and sabbatarianism.²⁰

Reverend George Bridges, the founder of the Colonial Church Union (CCU) claimed in 1823 to have baptized 10,000 slaves within two years in Manchester Parish.²¹

Neither the Reverends' accounts nor the Church histories give any information on the religious affinity of the thousands of slaves baptized in Manchester. The subsequent rebellion in Manchester in 1832 believed to have been led by Muslim, can serve to be an indication that there might have been a good proportion of Muslim slaves in Manchester who had been baptized against their will and religious beliefs.

The two autobiographical fragments of Abu Bakr al Siddiq, born in Timbuktu about 1790, a member of a learned family of the Western Sudan is regarded as the best testimony of the Muslim presence in Jamaica. The first personal account written in Arabic on September 20, 1834 was given to Magistrate Madden in Kingston, Jamaica. The second version also written in Arabic but in England in the following year in August was translated and published by G.C. Renour. These personal accounts of Abu Bakr al Siddiq can unfold the background of his family which hailed from the class of Ulama. The conduct of public affairs largely rested in their hands. His father and great grand fathers, both paternal and maternal presumably belonged to the class of juris consults.²²

²⁰ Michael Craton, Testing the Chains: Resistance to slavery in the British West Indies, (London; Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1982), p.247

²¹ Ibid.

²² Philip Curtin, *op. cit*; p.152.

Their family belonged to one of the "Shurafa" groups in Western Sudan which claimed descent from Prophet Muhammad (A.S.W.) Abu Bakr al-Siddiq had profound Quranic knowledge, initially in Jenne and subsequently in Bonna which was a Center of learning referred to by H. Bart as "a place of great celebrity for its learning and its schools, in the countries of the Mohammadan Mandingoes...."²³

Bonna and Jenne happened to be trading centres where Arab traders came from Fez and Meknes. These traders were usually well integrated into the general population, marrying local women and raising families. The children for these marriages sometimes inherited local chieftainships and eventually prompted the conversion of local population.²⁴

So, the presence of Muslim Arabs and their involvement further augmented Islam and Islamic practices. So strong was the Islamic orientation of Abu Bakr that even after thirty years in Jamaica, he could still recite the Quran "about by heart". Abu Bakr became prisoner in one of the anti Muslim campaigns carried out by the polytheist Ashanti government against Bouna and was sold to an English ship in about 1805 and transported to the West Indies. Like hundreds of other African slaves, Abu Bakr had different masters during bondage and had been baptized as Edward Donellan.²⁵

The accounts of Abu Bakr illustrate his firm belief in Islam, his total submission to Allah (SWT) and the acceptance of his bondage as Allah ordained. Though there looks a tinge of bitterness against slavery from its oppressive nature yet he does not lose faith in Allah (S.W.T.). He wrote:

But praise be to God, under whose power are all things. He does what ever He wills. No one can turn aside that which He has ordained, nor can anyone withhold that which He has given. As God Almighty Himself has said: Nothing can befall us unless it be written for us (in His book)! He is our master: in God, therefore, let all the faithful put their trust.²⁶

²³ Referred to by Philip Curtin, p. 153.

²⁴ Ira M. Lapidus, pp. 501-502.

²⁵ Philip Curtin, p. 155.

²⁶ ibid., p. 162.

In his personal recollections, Abu Bakr stresses the observance of the five pillars of faith and other Islamic principles by his family members. The recommendations of Dr. R.R. Madden brought freedom to Abu Bakr from his master in 1834. He received a donation of £20 from the inhabitants of Kingston raised by public subscription to help him start his life as a free man. Later, Madden recommended Abu Bakr to John Davidson, a medical doctor who was then preparing to undertake a private expedition to Timbuktu. Abu Bakr's noble ancestry helped Davidson to get permission from the Sultan of Morocco to undertake the expedition to Timbuktu. In Morocco, Abu Bakr was "fully acknowledged and (Davidson's) dragoman had orders from the palace to treat him with respect, as he was Mulay (prince)."²⁷

Perhaps Abu Bakr is one of the very few who returned to Africa to his home town, Jenne after almost thirty years of bondage in Jamaica. There was very little communication among the Muslim slaves living in the different parishes or on different plantation fields in Jamaica except for those who lived at the same place and belonged to the same master.

The adoption of the Emancipation Act in 1833 provided for the slaves in Jamaica the status of "apprentices". This opened the channel of communication between the slaves who had left Africa many decades before. These communications were initiated by the special magistrates like William Oldrey and R.R. Madden.²⁸

Muhammad Kaba, a Muslim slave of Spice Grove Estate in Manchester Parish (Jamaica) was facilitated to correspond with Abu Bakr in 1834 through Magistrate Madden. Kaba like Abu Bakr was also known in Jamaica by his Christian name Robert Tuffit or Robert Peart. He hailed from Bonka and carried Mandingo parentage. He belonged to a well established family learned in Law and Islamic teachings.²⁹

Kaba had studied Islamic Shariah at Timbuktu which was probably an important Centre of Arabic and Muslim studies. While there, he fell into the hands of robbers and carried down the coast to be sold to the European slave traders hence brought to Jamaica.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.155.

²⁸ Sultana, Afroz, *op.cit*; p. 15.

²⁹ J.H.Buchner, The Moravians in Jamaica, (London ; Longman, Brown and Company, 39 Paternoster Row, 1854), p.50.

The Observance of Islam on Plantation Fields.

The correspondence of Muhammad Kaba delineates his strong Islamic background. He greets Abu Bakr with an Islamic salutation, "As-Salamo Aleikum" and discloses his Muslim name. There is a profound happiness expressed in his letter that he was able to write to Abu Bakr who believed in Islam, had a good standing, and who had a similar fate.³⁰ Like many of his other Muslim slave brethren in the estates, Muhammad Kaba adhered to his belief in Islam and observed the Islamic practices. At a meeting with Brother G. Lewis, a Baptist Priest, Muhammad Kaba confessed: "Me do pray...Me say me believe in God, but not in his Son; for in me country we pray to God and his prophet Mohomet."³¹ Kaba was baptised by Brother Langley and like the other Muslim slaves was known by his Christian name, Robert Peart or Robert Tuffit. Apparently, so strong was his conviction in Islam that never in truth and in spirit, did Muhammad Kaba give up his faith in Islam. Even as a Baptist and a member of a Moravian Church, Kaba and many of his fellow Muslim slaves who had gone through the process of baptism "were in the habit of fasting three times a week, eating and drinking nothing from sunrise to sunset."³² Such a practice, usually observed by a devout Muslim, irritated the planters who took every means to put it down. Apparently, the planters were concerned with the efficient performance of the slaves. On one such occasion, an overseer finding his slaves fasting, ordered them to break stones all day with sledge-hammers. As true believers in Islam, they did not bow down to the pressures and break their fasts, but "readily continued to do till evening without intermission, and so successfully, that he (overseer) could not refrain from expressing his surprise."³³ Such observances of the Islamic pillar may tend to suggest that the Muslim slaves though baptized and were members of local Christian churches paying regular dues at the rate of 3 pence each became crypto-Muslims. They tried to reconcile the secret practice of Islam with the outward profession of Christianity to avoid grave consequences.

³⁰ Curtin, Philip Op.cit., pp. 164-165.

³¹ Buchner, J.H., Op.Cit., p. 51.

³² Ibid., p.52.

³³ Ibid.,

It was found that Abu Bakr and Anna Musa and others had founded a society and requested Madden to assist them in developing African Schools for African people in Kingston, Jamaica.

Jihad

Despite the tremendous odds and possible persecution, the African Muslim slaves rose in rebellion against slavery in January 1832, in Manchester, Jamaica. According to Madden, this rebellion is regarded to be in response to the call for **Jihad** made through a **Wathiqah**, a "pastoral letter" which "exhorted all of the followers of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) to be true and faithful if they wished to enter Paradise."³⁴ Apparently, this document written in Africa in 1789 was circulated in Jamaica and reached the hands of Muhammad Kaba alias Robert Peart in Manchester. The circulation of the document and the subsequent rebellion would suggest that the belief in Jihad to correct the brutal system was strong among the African Muslim slaves in Jamaica like in the other European colonies in the Caribbean at the time. Muhammad Kaba's leadership in this Jihad and his steadfastness in the performance of prayers and observance of fasting from sunrise to sunset dispel his profession of Christianity. Islamic practices were, perhaps being camouflaged and legitimized in the name of a Christian Church for the black slaves. The religious conviction of Muhammad Kaba and his Muslim fellow slaves often drew the suspicions of the local officials. On such occasion, Muhammad Kaba and some others were taken before a bench of magistrates and examined as to the nature of the instruction which they received. Muhammad Kaba might have been a slave but with his scholarly background in Islamic studies and his faith in Islam, he was no such naive to disclose his belief. His answers convinced the judges that the gospels were aimed to make them more valuable servants and better members of society. Muhammad Kaba along with the others were quietly dismissed.³⁵

Michael Craton in his "Testing the Chains: Resistance to slavery in the British West Indies", mentions this resistance as a "small outbreak" of unrest in which six rebels were shot

³⁴ Philip Curtin, p. 164.

³⁵ Buchner, p.53.

dead and two executed.³⁶ He, however, views it as part of the great rebellion, commonly known as the Baptist War which engulfed Jamaica in 1832. The involvement of Muhammad Kaba and others who apparently belonged to the Moravian Church may further suggest that the rebellion was not necessarily a total Baptist War but a Jihad against Christianity which legitimized the institution of slavery.

Incidentally, West Africa in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed Jihads led by Muslim scholars and teachers, preachers and their student followers, and the religious leaders of trading and agricultural communities. They aspired to carry out a double Jihad; the inner Jihad: the struggle against corruption of the body/individual, which must precede the outer Jihad, the war against pagan rulers and corrupt Muslim governments and the sycophant Ulama. More particularly, these Jihads were lodged against the corrupt and un-Islamic practices of West African Muslim states, such as illegal taxation, the seizure of private property, pagan ceremonial practices and "venal" mallams who served rulers without adequate knowledge of Islam. These uprisings were in the form of reforms unlike the commonly perceived wars.

Though such rebellions were for the most part suppressed, the spirit of Jihad or individual purification of one's self probably continued among the first generation of African Muslim slaves in Jamaica. Evidence suggests of similar outbreaks of Jihads in Haiti, French Guyana and Brazil.³⁷

The stories of probably hundreds of African Muslim slaves remained untold, unwritten and unheard. The few that have been written have also been decomposed under the weight of the white Christian masters, the Christian churches and subsequently by the Black Christian community, a community whose ancestors, perhaps, were once either Muslims or polytheists from Africa.

Retrogression of Islam

Despite the strong belief in Islam, the faith in its true form failed to make a permanent impact on the succeeding generations. With the death of the original African Muslim slaves, Islam was no longer practiced in Jamaica until the advent of the Indian indentured laborers. The

³⁶ Michael Craton, *Op. cit.*; p.311.

³⁷ Quick, *Op. cit.*; p.30.

typical West African Muslim had a profound sense of family and family authority. He was accustomed to live by a highly formalized set of rules largely influenced by the Islamic principles. If he belonged to the upper classes of society--as did many who subsequently fell victim to the slave trade--he might have had considerable experience as a political or military leader.

Under the cruel system of slavery and the harsh slave codes which governed the lives of the slaves, the African Muslims were not allowed to openly communicate in Arabic amongst themselves, but were forced to speak in English. As a result, Arabic, though not forgotten by the Muslim slaves failed to leave its influence on the Jamaican language. Perhaps, a thorough research on the Jamaican Patois might reveal the inclusion and usage of Arabic words.

With no freedom at all, the observance of all the five pillars of Islam was not possible. Though prayers were performed discreetly as confessed by the Muslim slaves, the rigours of the slavery system obviously were not conducive to offer prayers five times daily. Nor were they allowed to pray openly. Islam is a highly organized religion which calls upon its followers to adhere to congregational prayers five times a day at the appointed hours.³⁸ Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was quoted as having said: "In a team of every three men in a village, a group prayer should be held no matter how remote, unless they are controlled by Satan. Stick firmly on worship in groups, as the wolf usually hunts goats scattered away in isolation."³⁹ The prescribed congregational prayers instills a deep sense of unity and equality when all worshippers line up in united ranks side by side without any discrimination. The mere fact that all Muslims throughout the world face the Holy Kaba at the appointed hours brings a feeling of a universal unity. This, further, strengthens the bonds of amity and fraternity among the followers of Islam and a spiritual desire to uphold their common edifice. Prayers, furthermore, provide opportunities to Muslims to come together and meet daily, weekly and annually. In the absence of group prayers, under the brutal slavery system there was no opportunity to enliven Islam.

As examined earlier, faithful Muslim slaves, despite all the odds observed fasting. Muhammad Kaba alias Robert Peart confessed that whenever he wished to keep fast, he

³⁸ Al-Quran: 4: 103.

³⁹ Abu Dawood, Kitab al-Salaah, Ch. 46.

pretended to be sick. The observance of the other pillars were, however, simply not possible and also not a requirement given their slave status. Under the circumstances, the importance of the five pillars of Islam was weakened.

Even Islamic dietary principles could not be observed. Pork, which is restricted in Islam, seems to have been a common protein for the slaves. The virtues of family life and marriage were substituted with adultery, a sin which is forbidden in all the three divine religion.

In Trinidad, in the nineteenth century, the African Muslims had organized themselves under the leadership of Yunus Muhammad Bath. They had formed a "Mandingo Society" and established a school in the capital of Trinidad. Their strength increased with integration of African soldiers who had served in the British West Indian Regiment during the Napoleonic wars. Some of them were settled in South Trinidad and in Manzarilla in the northeast. They were provided land where they developed plantations of their own⁴⁰.

One of the main concerns of this group was to pool resources to buy the freedom of Muslim slaves. They worked very hard to earn money and petitioned the British government to repatriate them to Africa. One of such petitions addressed to William IV, king of Great Britain and Ireland began with 'Darood' Allahumma Salle 'ala Muhammad (O Allah bless Muhammad). They petitioned the British thrice but of no avail. This forced them to live in Trinidad permanently⁴¹.

Evidence shows that African Muslims in the Caribbean were at the forefront of the struggle to resist slavery. In Haiti, from 1753 to 1557 Mac Kandal a Muslim religious leader led numerous raids against the slave masters. In Surinam, the Bush Blacks were led by Arabi and Zam-Zam. They defeated the Dutch on many occasions and were finally given a treaty and their own territory which they control until today⁴².

⁴⁰ Abdul Wahid Hamid, "The Mandingo Muslims of Trinidad" in The Muslim Standard (Trinidad: April 1977), pp. 2,3.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.3.

⁴² G.A. Bettran, "Tribal Origins of Slaves in Mexico" Journal of Negro History, Vol.3, 1940.

These were some of the cases of African Muslims who struggled against the brutal system of European slavery. They were forced to forget their native languages. Arabic was for the most part, outlawed among the slave masses. It was not permitted to openly pray, fast or practice Islam. Pork was forced on the slaves as a main staple meat. Families were broken up and family life was discouraged. Adulterous relationship, with all the consequences became the norm. Islam remained as a dormant zeal in the minds of the Africans of the Caribbean. Islamic practices of dietary habits, mutual respect, cleanliness and modesty in dress remained in the culture of Afro Caribbeans but the vibrant African Islamic heritage was systematically suppressed by the slave master.

The period of Slavery is followed by indentureship which has many similarities with the oppressive system of slavery. However, Muslims were not comfortable with the indentureship but they made every effort to retain Islamic customs and rituals as they had picked up from India. This period will be studied in Chapter-III.

CHAPTER III**ISLAM AMONG INDENTURED LABOURERS**

In 1814, William Burnley, a prominent planter in Trinidad proposed to the Governor of Trinidad the importation of free labour from India on a large scale. Supporting Burnley's view, Governor Woodford wrote to the colonial office advocating the introduction of East Indian immigrants since free labour would be cheaper than slaves. About the same time Jamaica also advocated the introduction of labour from India.¹

Similarly, the Combined Court of British Guiana asked in, 1850, for a large influx of immigrants... without delay: Victor Schoelcher, the French humanitarian, similarly envisaged that immigration of free labour would be necessary after emancipation of African slaves in the French West Indies.

This was the background to a new wave of immigration in the Caribbean which began in 1838 and ended in 1924. Between 1838 and 1917, no fewer than 238,000 Indians were introduced into British Guiana, 145,000 into Trinidad, 21,500 into Jamaica, 39,000 into Guadelope, 34,000 into Surinam, 1,550 into St. Lucia, 1,820 into St. Vincent, and 2,570 into Grenada.² Between 1853 and 1924, over 22,000 workers from Java were introduced into Surinam. These are fragmentary statistics and do not portray the whole picture. Yet they are enough to show a total introduction of nearly half a million Indians into the Caribbean. As a result of Asian immigration, the East Indian population became the largest racial group in British Guiana, and the second largest in Trinidad; while East Indians and Javanese combined completely dominated Surinam.³

¹ Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969. (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1972), p. 347.

² Ibid., p.348.

³ Ibid., p. 350.

Only four territories of the Caribbean did not participate in the vast demographic revolution brought about in the area as a whole: independent Haiti; Spanish Santa Domingo, Spanish Puerto Rico, and British Barbados.⁴

The indenture system was fraught with problems stemming from mismanagement and lack of experience on the part of its administrators. Charges of fraud and unconcern for human dignity continued to be leveled.⁵

This indenture system was an un-qualified success of the British from the point of view of agricultural production. The major industry was saved, and the Colono states were properly assisted. The East Indian labour fulfilled the expectations attached to it.⁶

A vast majority of opinions during immigration and in historical perspective are appreciative for the system and for the industrious East Indians who made it work.⁷

This immigration of Indian workers succeeded at the cost of socio-cultural disadvantages to the East Indian. They had, after all, been detached from their homeland and transported thousands of miles to completely strange surroundings. More important, as individuals, as was true in British Guiana, the various immigrant groups to Trinidad consisted mostly of adult males, despite later efforts to introduce more females.⁸ Thus the family institution was targeted from the outset.

The persons most likely to immigrate to the Caribbean were unlettered and socio-economically depressed. They were mostly strangers to one another. The social relations of one's village or home district had been left behind.

⁴ Ibid.,

⁵ Sanderson Report by Committee on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies, Govt. of Great Britain, 1910. quoted by R.J. Smith in Muslim East Indian in Trinidad: Retention of Ethnic Identity under Acculturative Condition, (USA: University of Pennsylvania, 1963), p.16.

⁶ I.M. Cumpston, Indian Overseas in British Territories. 1834-1854, (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.100.

⁷ R.J. Smith, Muslim East Indians in Trinidad - Retention of Ethnic Identity under Acculturative Condition, (USA: University of Pennsylvania, 1963), p. 17.

⁸ Ibid. p.18.

The East Indian immigrant were not slaves and they did not have rights assured by law, but they were placed on the very same estates. Under the same basic social structure as their Negro predecessors. The East Indians came to the Caribbean on contract, generally for five years. The contract specified that the Indian labourer was to have a free passage to the West Indies and if he arrived in the West Indies before 1898, a free return passage at the end of his contract will be provided. Later, the planters revoked the provision of return passage and encouraged the labourer to settle in the Colonies. The law under which the East Indians labourers had been instituted for the sugar industry and its utilization of Indians; it was not the law of the land. The cultural ways of Indians were discouraged and were, in fact, often denied. Religious practices of Muslims were controlled. Construction of mosques and the offering of congregational Friday prayer were also discouraged.⁹

East Indians could not legally marry under their own religions traditions. The plague of "illegal" unions and "illegitimate" children were to haunt these people for almost one hundred years.¹⁰

The workers lived in barracks, with individual or family privacy reduced to a level one might expect of such a system. Their hours and wages were regulated and were not open to bargaining. Their freedom of movement was also restricted; a system of passes was devised, including arrest and imprisonment for violation of rules. Many were the complaints of grossly unfair, if not inhuman, incarceration of " Vagrant" or deserter East Indian.¹¹

For the planters, these restriction were necessary " to prevent the labourers, from breaking their contracts and wandering off, with the result that they were frequently found in a helpless and destitute and even starving condition".¹²

Notwithstanding all these administrative and legislative measures, it must be noted that the estate workers were given certain guarantees, among which was the right to a Pass for the

⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Sanderson Report, Part-I, p.64, as quoted by R.J. Smith, p.20.

purpose of lodging a complaint with the Protector of Immigrants, a government officer appointed for this purpose. Also stipulated were guaranteed wages, maximum hours to be worked and regular days off. Medical facilities were to be provided on each estate. At first, food was also included in the agreement, but the cost was deducted from wages, and finally for those among the labourers who had become more self-sufficient, this provision was totally withdrawn. The indentured labourer himself had no influence in proposing the terms and conditions under which he was recruited, transported, assigned to employers and treated on the job. The controlling parties were the government of India, the British government through the colonial office and the colonial establishments which were largely controlled by the larger planters. "Basically, the terms of contract in the 1840's were as follows:

1. The immigrant would offer five years of labour to an estate.
2. He/She would normally, be employed and paid as a day worker.
3. His/her daily wages should be one shilling for a man, eight pence for a woman, and four pence for a child but task work, if accepted should be paid at the prevalent local rates.
4. He should be provided with free housing, usually in barracks, and free medical attention.
5. For the first three months, until he got his provision grounds into production, he would be supplied with food according to an established ratio, but he would have to pay a fixed sum, about one third of his daily wages.
6. After serving for five years he could either re-indenture himself with the same or another employer or he could claim a free passage back to India.¹³

As the years passed and conditions changed, the estate owners became reluctant to provide the funds for return for passages. They were even more reluctant to lose the new comers. Their policy changed, as verteuil in late last century records, " the Coolies are ... entitled to a free passage after ten years' residence in the colony; an arrangement much to be regretted, in as much as we are pledged to send back to their country the very people for the

¹³ Douglas Hall, The Caribbean Experience, an Historical Survey 1450-1960, (Kingston, Jamaica: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1982), p.94.

introduction of whom such heavy sacrifices have been made, and whose labour we urgently required. This is an evil to which we must submit".¹⁴

The majority of the East Indians had no desire to leave. The law was eventually changed to provide a free land allotment, in lieu of return passage. Later, this land was available, but to be purchased. Most of the East Indians chose land in Trinidad, Guyana and elsewhere than to return to the uncertainty that was India. Many availed themselves of the offer, and thus became permanent settlers¹⁵.

The Indian Muslims hailed, primarily, from the illiterate class and were forced to co-exist with the Hindus. They were not able to transport Islamic Community life with them from India and became the targets of hostility from every angle. The Hindus, in Trinidad called the Indian Muslims 'Mandingas', in a derogatory manner thereby underlining the fact that they had more in common with the African Muslims from the Mandingo tribes. This also indicates that there were African Muslims of slave origin even after the abolition of slavery and upto at least 1850¹⁶.

Also in Guyana, to this day, Indian Muslims are called "Fula" by the Hindus obviously after the Fula peoples of West Africa. An example of the hostility and oppression meted out to Islam and the Muslims when where a group of Muslims in Trinidad gathered together to offer Eid prayer for the first time, on Palmist Estate in South Trinidad were flogged.¹⁷

Missionaries started their activities to convert the Muslim and Hindus to Christianity. By 1865, the Indian Muslims of the Caribbean started making efforts to resist the hostility and oppression around them. The first mosques were built in Guyana either from mud and grass or

¹⁴ L.A.A. de Verteuil, Trinidad: Its Geography, Natural Resources, Administration, Present condition, and Prospects, (London: Cassell and Co, 1884), 2nd ed. pp.349-350

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 350.

¹⁶ Abdul Wahid Hamid, "Muslim, in the West Indies", unpublished Paper presented to the Conference on Muslim Minorities, Islamic Council of Europe, 1978, p.16.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.16.

wood and covered with palm leaves. To these mosques were added "Maktab", to cater for the Islamic education of the Muslim Children.¹⁸

Conclusion

Although, the Muslims were not highly educated in Arabic language, Urdu language or Islamic studies, they succeeded in maintaining their faith by practicing the fundamentals of Islam and assembling on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (ASW) and other occasions.¹⁹ The Indian Muslims had learnt this "Islam" from the Indian villages where Hindu cultural traditions had amalgamated with Islamic traditions. As soon as they were exposed to pure teachings of Islam, they started discerning between real Islam and the "Indian version of Islam". The next chapter deals with the efforts of Dawah workers and teachers who taught the Caribbean people about what Islam stood for.

¹⁸ Quick, p.35.

¹⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY DA'WAH WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN

The early Muslim communities of the Caribbean depended mostly on the visiting Dawah workers from Indo-Pak subcontinent for their Islamic orientation. Both Da'wah workers and pioneers kept Islamic consciousness burning within the Muslim hearts. For people of African descent Islam was only a faint memory of Africa lurking in the subconscious mind. For Muslims of Indian, Arab and Javanese descent, Islam had become a cultural heritage passed on in secrecy and often without sound knowledge of its total actual requirement.¹ The Indian Muslims were, however, capable to become the link between the early period of Muslim contact and a new phase of re-awakening period. In the beginning of the present century, the Muslims of Indian descent started building communities, developing Islamic organizations and strengthening Islamic institutions in the areas where they made up a sizeable proportion.² We start from Trinidad and shall discuss the cases of Guyana and Barbados. Trinidad, though a tiny island, but has been in the forefront to perform pioneering role with regards to Da'wah work. Being a central place with respect to socio-political and economic activity, it has been the focal point of Islamic activities too. Various trends and patterns which were initiated in Trinidad, subsequently got currency in other territories of the Caribbean. The Muslim community of Trinidad depended to a large extent on the coming of Da'wah workers from Indo Pak Sub-Continent to protect and propagate Islam in the island.

Through all pressures, however, Traditional Islam survives in strength. It is this Islam, of which 95% of Trinidad's Muslims are adherents, that so notably withstands efforts to modify and dilute its influence. More important, it is this Islam which continues to provide its proponents with the key to religion-ethnic

¹ Abdullah Hakim Quick, Deeper Roots: Muslims in the Caribbean before Columbus to the Present, AICCLA Papers:1, (Bahamas: Nassau, 1990), p.37.

² Ibid.

identity and the separatism and distinctness that this identity develops and encourages.³

The Dawah workers and pioneers from Indo-Pak Sub-Continent revitalized Da'wah work by setting in motion a missionary zeal and commitment among the Trinidadian Muslims. Coincident with this burning need of effective Da'wah work, there appeared in Trinidad in 1883, a young man from India, one Sayyed Abdul Aziz. Having secured his freedom from indentureship, he settled at I"ere Village. Abdul Aziz appeared to have been a natural leader, with a personality and ability that captivated his people.⁴ He founded the East Indian National Association (E.I.N.A.) in 1893 and was President of that body for remainder of his life. He fought for the registration of East Indian marriages and for the abolition of the indenture system. Having had Madrassa training in India, he was looked upon as a religious authority. In Abdul Aziz, the people had the leader they desired. His people honoured him in 1907 with an appointment as the First Qadi of Trinidad.⁵

Sayyed Abdul Aziz instilled in the Muslim community of Trinidad, a widespread awareness and awakening about Islam. He imparted organizational ability which gave order and purpose to Muslim's existence. Many mosques were built through his inspiration. Young Men's Muslim Associations were formed under his guidance. "The crowning achievement of Sayyed Abdul Aziz came in 1926, when he united the leading Muslims of the Colony (Trinidad) and founded, and became the first President of the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association (SIC). This was the first organization to be accepted by both the Muslims and the Colonial Government as the official representative body of the Island's Muslim population⁶". He instilled in the people a group pride. Though the people of Trinidad had a charismatic leader in their midst but they were apparently not conscious and appreciative of his leadership until more than a quarter century of

³ R.J.Smith, Muslim East Indians in Trinidad: Retention of Ethnic Identity under Acculturative Conditions, (USA: University of Pennsylvania, 1963), p. 156.

⁴ Ibid., p. 164.

⁵ Ibid., p. 165.

⁶ Ibid.,

his effort had bore fruit. Though they considered him a great leader but still they were looking towards an additional leadership.

Haji Ruknudeen Meah, a member of the Chishti order of Sufism arrived in Trinidad from Hissar, Punjab (India) in 1893.⁷

Ruknudeen Meah along with a ship load of other indentured labourers left the immigration depot at Garden Reach, Calcutta on board the Moy⁸. This voyage took a little over three months and Ruknudeen Meah took full advantage of this time and opportunity to give Da'wah amongst his fellow indentured immigrants. The long voyage finally ended when the Moy docked at the Port-of-Spain harbour on the 11th December, 1893⁹.

Ruknudeen and 17 other immigrants were assigned to the La Plaisance Estate in La Romain. Through determination, perseverance and hard work, Ruknudeen organized his Muslim brothers and sisters from the La Plaisance and neighbouring estates into small groups. He taught them the fundamentals basis of Islam, the ability to read, write and understand Arabic and Urdu. This was possibly one of the first regular Maktabas that was established on the estates¹⁰.

On the estates, the Muslims found themselves faced with many obstacles in practicing their religion. They were forced to withstand the pressures of the Christian missionaries from the Canadian Presbyterian Mission who were eager to convert the Muslims to Christianity. They faced punishments for observing their Islamic festivals, and were not granted time off for their compulsory prayers. Ruknudeen encouraged the Muslims to meet secretly on a regular basis to discuss ways and means to practice and propagate Islam. It has been reported that since the immigrants were prohibited to use lamps in their dilapidated barrack quarters, the Muslims

⁷ Wazifa Susan Ali, The Historical Context of the Indian Diaspora: Haji Ruknudeen Meah and the Consolidation of the Muslim Community of Trinidad and Tobago, 1893-1963, (Uni. of the West Indies, St. Augustine, 1995), pp. 1-4.

⁸ A.A., de Verteuil, Eight East Indian Immigrants, (Port of Spain: 1989), p. 182.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wazifa Susan Ali, Op. Cit., p. 5

started reciting the Qur'an by the moonlight that beamed into their rooms from the holes in the roof and walls¹¹.

Despite all obstacles in their way, the Muslim immigrants were determined to preserve and propagate their Islam. Thus, with " a fanatical zeal they served their religion with loyalty and devotion and completely resigned themselves to the will of God ¹²."

Ruknudeen, in his attempt to propagate Islam, had created quite a stir on the La Plaisance and neighbouring estates. In an unsuccessful bid to get rid of this 'trouble maker', the estate manager had complained to the immigrant officials that Ruknudeen Meah was not a genuine indentured immigrant but rather a Muslim missionary in disguise¹³. After investigations, the officials had agreed with manager's findings, yet in order to save cost on his bringing to Trinidad, the decision was taken not to deport him back to India.

Ruknudeen was, however, not satisfied with his restricted life on the estate. He decided to get rid of this trap. On the 6th June, 1895, he terminated his indentureship by paying the cost of the rest of the three and a half years with the financial help of Imam Imdad Hosein of Victoria Village. Imam Imdad had believed that Ruknudeen would be able to make a greater contribution to the Muslim's cause if he was free to serve on a full-time rather than a part time basis. As a free man, Ruknudeen worked assiduously and soon became renowned as a dynamic religious leader. He played major roles in establishing Jamaats (Muslim communities attached with mosques) introducing maktab classes and constructing mosques throughout the colony.¹⁴

At some point in time, Ruknudeen and Sayyed Abdul Aziz met each other and they became life long friends¹⁵. They joined forces to counteract the onslaught of the Christian

¹¹ W. Ali, Building Bridges in Society. (Trinidad: San Juan, 1992), p. 182.

¹² M. Rafeeq, "History of Islam and Muslims in Trinidad", in Souvenir Brochure of the Jinnah Memorial Mosque, 25th April, 1954, p. 29.

¹³ Wazifa, p.7.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.9.

missionary activities that were spearheaded by the Canadian Presbyterian Missionaries. "The main intention of mission work was to win souls to Christianity".¹⁶

On the instruction of Sayyed Abdul Aziz, Ruknudeen moved to Tunapuna to protect Muslims of Tunapuna from being Christianized by the Canadian Presbyterians. He worked out a strategy to foil the missionary activities. He acquired a piece of land on the Eastern Main Road directly facing the road to Reverend Morton's Aramalya Mission. Ruknudeen opened his tailoring business on the premises and used to carefully monitor Morton's movement. Ruknudeen used to sew a traditional white oriental dress for men---kurta pajama (shirt & trousers) and topees (caps). He had a constant flow of customers from the East Indian population living in the villages and estates. Since the indentured labourers could not leave the estates as frequently as they desired. It was his practice to load the readymade garments into his cart and visit the estates everyday. He had travelled in his cart to all the areas that Reverend Morton had visited¹⁷. While doing his business, he always used this opportunity to indoctrinate his customers on the principles, practices and teachings of Islam. The Canadian Missionaries had used every method to trap the Muslims and Hindus but Ruknudeen Meah did not let their efforts succeed. The mass establishment of maktabs and increased circulation of Islamic literature by him had thwarted the Canadian Missionaries in their numerous attempts to Christianize the Muslim population.

There was an urgent need for a more integrated group which could incorporate all the Muslims in Trinidad. In addition, it was felt that there was need to a greater extent of religious education among Muslims. Sayyed Abdul Aziz, Haji Ruknudeen, Abdul Ghani and the other stalwarts among the Muslims mistakenly believed that the solution lay in inviting Muslim missionaries to Trinidad to instruct and guide the Muslim community¹⁸.

¹⁶ Brinslay Samaroo, "Missionary Methods and the Local Responses: "The Canadian Presbyterians and the East Indians in the Caribbean"" in B. Brereton and W. Dookeran eds. East Indians in the Caribbean, (New York : 1982), p.95.

¹⁷ Wazifa, p. 13.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

The Muslim community of Trinidad was very unfortunate in their selection of missionaries who visited Trinidad during the formative phase. In most cases, the missionaries were either Qadianis or the extremists who brought with them many prejudices which they probably inherited from India. The extremist elements sought to implement their own conservative brand of Islam that did not coincide with the views of the majority of the local Muslims.

In 1920, a highly placed Committee under the leadership of Haji Ruknudeen Meah, decided to correspond with the Working Mission of England to send for a religious scholar to Trinidad. In 1921 Moulvi Fazal Karim Khan Durrani whose forefathers hailed from Afghanistan, arrived in Trinidad with the objective of educating Muslims and defending Islam against criticism made by non-Muslims. This selection, too, proved to be a major disappointment to the Muslim community. He was identified as the follower of Lahori Group of Qadianis¹⁹ who believed that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the 'promised Messiah' of Islam.

Trinidadian Muslims under the leadership of Ruknuddin Meah did not err in identifying him as Qadiani. Durrani was however, successful in creating gulf in the ranks of Muslims. He imparted an irreparable loss on the Muslim community of Trinidad by sowing the seeds of Qadianism in the form of Amir Ali who left no stone unturned in dilapidating the edifice of Muslim's unity. The role of Durrani and Amir Ali will be discussed in detail in Chapter VII under the headings Islamic International and Da'wah Organizations in the Caribbean --- the case of Trinidad and Tobago..

In 1914, Moulvi Haji Sufi Shah Mohammad Hassan Hanfi Qadiri set his foots on the soil of Trinidad as a Muslim missionary from India. He had come with an ambition to educate and unify the Muslim community. Instead, he was destined to create the first serious break among the Muslims in Trinidad. Like Ruknuddin, he was a sufi but he belonged to the Qadiri order of Sufism. During his stay, he was popularly referred to as "Lal Darhi"²⁰ (read beard). Throughout his four year stay in Trinidad, Pir Hassan emphasized on the outward visible manifestation of the faith. To him, Muslims in Trinidad were too westernized in their dress and this only was

¹⁹ Ibid., p.22.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

enough to undermine their Islam. He gave religious verdict that it was Islamically forbidden to wear any British-styled clothing. Instead he advocated that the Muslims should wear only the traditional clothing which were invogue in India at that time. Pir Hassan introduced a system "Peeree Muridee" and bound his followers through a written declaration . Those who accepted him as "pir" or religious mentor were assured of a guaranteed place in Heaven.²¹ Pir Sahib taught the strict, orthodox, religious code which he believed was a fundamental part of Islam.

Muslims who did not accept the *fatwas* (rulings) of Pir Hassan were branded as Kafirs (unbelievers). His adherence to the orthodox and conservative ideas had aroused the fury and distrust of Muslim leaders like Sayyed Abdul Aziz, Ruknudeen Meah and others.²²

This man undoubtedly had an important effect on his people. In the mid-twentieth century, people speak of him in somewhat light-hearted, humorous tones, but always with the acknowledgement that he tried to bring the traditional Islam of Mother India to Trinidad, his extreme ideas notwithstanding. Though their goals may have been similar, "Lal Darhi" was finally joined in battle by Sayyed Abdul Aziz and other less extreme Trinidadian Muslims of knowledge and repute. As a result "Lal Darhi" left the Island in 1918.²³ Though Pir Sahib left Trinidad realizing that his stay would further divide the Muslims but the damage was already done.

In order to counteract Ameer Ali (alleged to be a Qadiani), Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association (ASJA) sent an emissary to India in 1936. He returned from Lahore (Lahore at that time was a part of India) with Maulana Nazir Ahmad Simab who spoke far and wide in the colony and conducted tri-lingual maktab classes - in Arabic, Urdu and English. He could not acknowledge the fissures in the Muslim's ranks but lectured to the Muslims of all persuasions. This attitude of Maulana Simab could not get approval of A.S.J.A. which wanted him to work only with A.S.J.A. members. He could not agree with the restrictions imposed by A.S.J.A. He

²¹ Wazifa, p.20.

²² Ibid.

²³ R.J. Smith, p.168.

was suspended after one year of service. He made attempts to work without the organization's stamps and support but found it financially impossible and returned to Lahore in 1938²⁴.

He was later persuaded by his students to come back to Trinidad. This he did, in 1939 at the expense of his hosts. At first he tried to re-associate himself with A.S.J.A. but was rebuffed. He then went to T.I.A. but was again refused. Only then did he decide to set up a new organization which he named as "Tabligh ul Islam"²⁵ (propagation of Islam).

He stood for propagation of Islam through education. He prepared the sermons of religious practices and distributed them on wide scale in Trinidad. His sermons are available with old people of Trinidad even to this day.

Maulana Simab could not appreciate well the methods and techniques of Ameer Ali which he employed to propagate Qadiyanat otherwise in an indirect way. He made efforts to form a true coalition with the forces of the T.I.A. An amalgamation did occur in about 1943. The Tablighul Islam was formally abolished and all of its membership was absorbed into the T.I.A.²⁶ Within a year, the former Tabligh ul Islam members were numerically superior to the T.I.A. members who had taken them to their bosom. The result was an election defeat for all former T.I.A. office bearers, another blow for Ameer Ali. Earlier, a majority of T.I.A. members had dissociated to form a powerful association of their own, Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association, popularly known as A.S.J.A. As soon as Nazir Ahmad Simab got stronger, the operations and functions of the T.I.A. were effectively taken and run by Simab and his associates. Ameer Ali and his gang felt the ground moving from under his feet. This situation was intolerable for him. On that occasion, it was he who defected from the very association he had, for more than fifteen years, called his own.²⁷

The goal before Maulana Simab was to propagate Islam through education and Training. He explored every avenue to educate Muslim Children and youth. At a point of time, he

²⁴ Ibid., p.182.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 183.

²⁷ R.J. Smith, p.184.

approached Ameer Ali about an unused school building located in a suburb of Port of Spain. Ameer Ali and T.I.A. agreed to permit Nazir Ahmad to operate a school in their building. Thus, January 1942 marked the inauguration of the first primary school for Muslim children in Trinidad. This was a private school, with one head teacher and seven pupil teachers. After Simab's death, the people continued their support of his school for several years during which time the struggle for government recognition went on unabated. In 1949, a law was passed which entailed financial support for denominational educational institutions of Hindus and Muslims. It was a glorious day for Trinidad's Muslims when the 1948 Trinidad Royal Gazette carried a notice regarding the "placing of the Islamia...Elsocorro, SanJuan, on the list for Government inspection and aid"²⁸.

Gayaz Rajab, a Muslim intellectual in Trinidad said in an interview with the writer.

"People of Trinidad still remember and respect Nazeer Ahmad Simab for his contribution in the field of education".²⁹

Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and Dr. Fazlur Rahman Ansari of the World Federation of Islamic Missions with headquarters in Karachi, Pakistan visited the Caribbean countries several times in 1950s. They addressed huge gatherings in the mosques, approached influential individuals, mobilized Dawah workers and invited promising students to Aleemiyah Institute at Karachi to attain knowledge of Islamic disciplines to a higher level. Many of the graduates of this Institute played remarkable role in promotion of Islamic knowledge in the Caribbean. They had prompted M.K. Hossein and the A.S.J.A. leadership to establish a separate wing to reach out to the greater Caribbean society. With the establishment of the Islamic Missionaries Guild for the Caribbean and South America, Islamic Dawah took a new turn in the Caribbean. Through its monthly paper, the Torch of Islam, radio broadcasts, training camps and distribution of Islamic literature and contact with the Islamic World, the Guild was able to spread the message of Islam and influence a number of people from various ethnic backgrounds and walks of life.

²⁸ Ibid., p.188.

²⁹ My Interview with Gayaz Rajab, in Trinidad on January 30, 1995.

In 1931 in Guyana, a religious person from Bombay (India) by the name of Maulana Sayyid Shamsuddeen played instrumental role in founding a Muslim Organization named Sadr Anjuman-e-Islam. The thrust of this organization was protection of interest of 'AhluS Sunnah Wal Jamaah in Guyana. This organization was also active in solving Muslim's problems, educating Muslim youth and arranging proper burial for poor and deserving Muslims.³⁰

In Barbados, a Bengali Muslim Basharat Ali arrived in 1915 but he could not make any considerable Islamic impact. "In 1928, three Muslims from Gujrat, India, left for Brazil. They reached French Guyana before they could reach Brazil. There, they learned that working conditions in Brazil were not very favourable. They were advised by local people to move to Guyana where there was a considerable number of Muslims. Two, out of three, left for Trinidad. The following year, three more Gujrati Muslims came for Brazil. They followed the route of earlier Gujratis. One of them decided to go to Panama while the other two came to Barbados. They met some Bengali Muslims and found that working conditions in Barbados were far better than in Guyana. Both of these Muslims were Hafiz e Qur'an (one who has memorized the Qur'an). Their names were Hafiz Suleman Kasuji and Musa Patel. They also acted as first imams in Barbados. They wrote about Barbados to their relatives in India. In this way, many other Muslims were attracted to Barbados.³¹ Muhammad Degia further revealed that by 1937, there were about 20 Gujrati and 25 Bengali Muslims in Barbados but all these Muslims could not operate as an organized group. "The same year (1937) eleven more Gujratis reached Barbados including my father Muhammad Ibrahim Degia. In this group there were three educated Muslims, my father, Mr. Yusuf Bulbulia and Moulvi Yusuf Saja. They organized the Barbados Muslims Association".³²

By 1946, immigrant Muslims had deeply involved themselves in the local business. Some of them had started joint business ventures. In 1948, twelve more Muslims came from India to

³⁰ Guyana Islamic Trust, Guyana Situation Report, unpublished, 1995, (Guyana: Lombard Street, Georgetown, Sept. 1995), p.3.

³¹ Interview with Muhammad Degia, one of the pioneer Muslims in Barbados on Feb. 8, 1995.

³² Muhammad Degia, Op. Cit.

Barbados. Two of them were alims. They decided to build a mosque in Barbados. They planned and gathered resources for the mosque and by 1950, the number of Muslims had also increased considerably. So, the Juma Mosque was built as the first mosque in Barbados. Muhammad Ibrahim Degia who was the President of Barbados Muslim Association also acted as the secretary of the Mosque.

"In 1953-54, the first maktab was established in Barbados by Maulana Muhammad Dawood Bandore. Two alims from India and one Hafiz of the Qur'an were employed to teach at the maktab. The second mosque named, City Mosque was built on February. 2, 1957 by the Gujrati community in Barbados".³³

So, these were the first Islamic institutions established in Barbados, a country populated by the majority of Afro-Barbadians. About Da'wah work in Barbados, Muhammad Degia said,

I joined my father in November 1956. I came across a book *Izharul Haq* by Maulana Rehmatullah Kiranwi and another book *Qisas al Anbiya* by Maulana Hifzur Rehman Sewharwi. We read these books to increase our Islamic knowledge. Muhammad Ibrahim Degia, Maulana Yusuf Patel and Musa Raja were the first people to start Da'wah work in Barbados in 1958. Within a period of six months, six Barbadians came to the fold of Islam. But, unfortunately, these new Muslims could not be absorbed in the Muslim community of Barbados. There was a difference of culture, standard of education and understanding which inhibited to absorb them as a full fledged member of the Muslim community (of Indian background³⁴).

In 1966, Islamic Missionaries Guild was established in Trinidad. Muhammad Degia and his father Muhammad Ibrahim Degia attended the first convention of IMG. Muhammad Ibrahim Degia became the first representative of IMG in Barbados. Under the auspices of IMG, Da'wah work was re-started through distributing Islamic literature. When Muhammad Ibrahim Degia died in 1968, his son, Muhammad Degia became the representative of IMG in Barbados. A radio programme on Islam from Radio Barbados was started with the efforts of Da'wah workers including Muhammad Hashim, Abdus Samed Bandore and Saeed Gotriwala. This programme

³³ Muhammad Degia, Op. Cit.

³⁴ Ibid.

continued for six years but later this could not be continued for shortage of resources. Later, the city Mosque also started a maktab in 1971.

Conclusion

The Indian Muslims, especially in Trinidad and Guyana have been, from the very beginning conscious about retaining their Islamic culture. But being illiterate, they did not know how to resist the Hindu influence and the pressure from the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. Though the Indian Muslims have been adaptable to economic changes but they did not compromise on their cultural identity. The fundamentals of Islamic belief and practice have been retained in all life crises. Arrival of Maulana Simab and Dr. Fazlur Rehman Ansari have increased the collective Islamic ambience and consciousness of the Muslim communities. With the cultural retentiveness, the Muslim communities of the Caribbean have gained certain socio-economic and political status which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Part Two

**SOCIO - POLITICAL
AND
ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE**

CHAPTER V**SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS
OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES**

The territories of the Caribbean basin may be divided into three major categories based on the numerical strength of the Muslims, their organizational development and vibrancy of the Muslim community.

The first category includes Trinidad and Guyana because the Muslims are well organized there as a community and on the other hand are considered as important feature of the socio-political and economic life. The Second category includes territories where Islam has emerged with dynamism during the last two decades and the number of the Muslims is gradually increasing¹. These territories are Jamaica, Barbados, Grenada and Barbados.

The third category includes territories where newly established converted communities are organized and have founded their Islamic institution at least at one location. These are: Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Bermuda, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands and Mt. Serrat.

In this chapter, the first two categories will be discussed in detail. Because of the negligible socio-political role of the Muslim Communities, the third category will not be discussed in this chapter.

i) **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago consists of Trinidad, the southernmost of the Caribbean islands and Tobago, which is 32 km (20 miles) to the north-east. Trinidad, which accounts for 94% of the total area, lies just off the north coast of Venezuela, on the South American mainland, while the country's nearest neighbour to the north is Grenada. The climate is tropical, with a dry season from January to May. The official and main language is English, but French, Spanish, Hindi and Chinese are also spoken. In 1980 about 60% of the population

¹ M. Ali Kettani, "Muslims in the Caribbean" in Muslims in the American Continent, edited by M. Ali Kettani and A.M.M. Bow, (Paris: Hariri Cultural Foundation), underpress, p.4.

were Christians, mainly Roman Catholics (34%) and Anglicans (15%), while 25% were Hindus and 6% Muslims.

Recent History

Trinidad was first colonized by the Spanish in 1532, but was ceded to the British in 1802. Africans were transported to the island to work as slaves, but slavery was abolished in 1834. Shortage of labour led to the arrival of large numbers of Indian and Chinese immigrants, as indentured labourers, during the second half of the 19th century. In 1888 the island of Tobago, which had finally been ceded to the British in 1814, was joined with Trinidad as one political and administrative unit, and the territory remained a British colony until its independence on 31st August, 1962.

The first political party was the People's National Movement (PNM) was founded in 1956 by Dr. Eric Williams. It campaigned successfully at the elections to the Legislative Council in September 1956, and Dr. Williams became the colony's first Chief Minister in October, 1956. In 1958 the territory became a member of the newly-established Federation of the West Indies, and in the following year achieved full internal self-government, with Dr. Williams as Premier. With the secession of Jamaica from the Federation in 1961, Trinidad and Tobago withdrew and the Federation collapsed. After independence, in 1962, Dr. Williams was restyled Prime Minister, and the Governor became Governor-General. In 1967, Trinidad and Tobago became the first Commonwealth member of the Organization of American States.

In April 1970 the Government declared a state of emergency, following violent demonstrations, lasting several weeks, by supporters of 'Black Power', protesting against foreign influence in the country's economy and demanding a solution to the problem of unemployment, which was particularly severe among Trinidadians of African descent. The first parliamentary elections of the Republic was held in September, 1976 when the PNM won 24 of the 36 seats in the House of Representatives. The United Labour Front (ULF), a newly-formed party led by trade unionists, won 10 seats, while the Democratic Action Congress (DAC) won the two Tobago seats. The former Governor-General, Ellis Clarke, was sworn in as the country's first President in December, 1976. A parliamentary resolution in 1977 to grant Tobago self-rule resulted, after long resistance from the Government, in the formation in 1980 of a Tobago House of Assembly, giving this island limited autonomy.

Dr. Williams, who had been Prime Minister since Independence, died in March, 1981. The President selected George Chambers, a deputy leader of the PNM and Minister of Agriculture, to assume the leadership ad interim. At a special convention of the PNM in May, Chambers was formally adopted as party leader and confirmed as Prime Minister. The PNM increased its majority in the House of Representatives by two seats in a general election in November. The ULF, the DAC and the Tapia House Movement, campaigning jointly as the Trinidad and Tobago National Alliance, succeeded in retaining only 10 seats. The newly-formed Organization for National Reconstruction (ONR), led by former PNM Minister Karl Hudson-Phillips, emerged as the only serious threat to the PNM, gaining 22.3% of the total vote but no seats.

Co-operation between the four opposition parties increased, and, at local elections in August 1983, they combined to oppose the PNM. This new coalition, called the 'Accommodation', won 66 of the 120 council seats being contested. The PNM won the remaining 54, thus suffering its first electoral defeat since its foundation in 1956. In August 1984 the National Alliance and the ONR established a common front, to be known as the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). At elections to the Tobago House of Assembly in November 1984, the DAC won a convincing victory, reducing the PNM's representation from four seats to one. In September 1985 A.N.R. Robinson, leader of the DAC and a former Deputy Prime Minister in the PNM Government, was elected leader of the NAR. In February 1986 the four parties merged to form one opposition party, still known as the NAR.

The stringent economic policies of the PNM Government undermined its public support and provoked labour unrest over wage restraint, notably in a bitter strike at Trinidad's petroleum refineries during May, 1984. The next general election, held in December 1986, resulted in a decisive victory for the NAR, which received 66% of the total votes and won 33 of the 36 seats in the House of Representatives. A.N.R. Robinson was appointed Prime Minister. Chambers was among those members of the PNM who lost their seats, and in January 1987 Patrick Manning, the former Minister of Energy, was appointed leader of the parliamentary opposition. In March, Noor Hassanali, formerly a senior judge, took office as President, following the retirement of Sir Ellis Clarke.

In April 1989 Besdeo Panday announced the formation of a left-wing opposition party, the United National Congress (UNC). In July 1990 Panday was elected leader of the UNC at the Party's first national Assembly. In September, the President confirmed Panday as the leader of the parliamentary opposition, replacing Manning. The UNC, with six seats in the House of Representatives, replaced the PNM, with only three seats, as the principal opposition party.

On 27th July, 1990 members of the Ja'miat al Muslimeen (JAM), a small Muslim group led by Yasin Abu Bakr, attempted to seize power from the Government. They destroyed the capital's police headquarters and took control of the parliament building and the state television station. Some 45 people were taken hostage, including the Prime Minister, A.N.R. Robinson, and several cabinet ministers. Demands were made for Robinson's resignation, for elections to be held within 90 days and for those taking part in the attempted coup to be granted an amnesty. On 28th July a state of emergency was declared and a curfew was imposed, following widespread looting in the capital by thousands taking advantage of the political crises and consequent preoccupation of the police. On 31st July the Prime Minister, who had been shot in the leg, reportedly for refusing to tender his resignation, was released from captivity by the rebels, on medical grounds. On 1st August, 1990 the activists surrendered unconditionally. An amnesty pardoning the JAM activists signed by the President of the Senate, Joseph Emmanuel Carter, in his capacity as acting Head of State, was proclaimed invalid, on the grounds that it had been signed under duress. In mid-August Abu Bakr and his followers were charged with treason, a capital offense. Some 30 people were killed and another 500 injured during the five-day attempted coup.

In November 1991 the imprisoned Jamaat al Muslimeen activists won an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, which ruled that the validity of the presidential pardon issued during the attempted coup in July 1990 should be determined before the accused were brought to trial, and that an application for their release should be heard by the High Court of Trinidad and Tobago immediately. On 30 June, 1992 the High Court ruled that the pardon was valid, and ordered the immediate release of the 114 defendants. In mid-July the Government announced that it would pursue all legal means of appeal against the decision, which it deemed to be of great constitutional significance. The case came to appeal in May, 1993.

General elections, held on 16 December, 1991, resulted in a decisive victory for the PNM, which secured 45.1% of the votes and won 21 seats in the House of Representatives. The implementation of unpopular austerity measures was widely acknowledged as the main cause of the defeat of the ruling NAR, which lost all but two of its seats in the House. As a result of his party's defeat, A.N.R. Robinson resigned as leader of the NAR. A notable feature of the elections was the re-emergence of ethnic voting, with the vast majority of the votes divided between the Afro-Trinidadian-oriented PNM and the largely Indo-Trinidadian UNC, which secured 13 seats in the House of Representatives. On 17 December Patrick Manning was sworn in as Prime Minister, and on 20 December a new cabinet was appointed.

In the recent elections held in December 1995, the United National Conference (UNC) led by Mr. Basdeo Panday has defeated the People's National Movement (PNM). Both the parties had got 17 seats but the two seats of Tobago won by the National Alliance of Reconstruction (NAR) which made an alliance with the UNC had actually played a decisive role towards the UNC's victory. Muslim who were elected in the election 1995 are: Dr. Reeza Mohammad, Dr. Faud Khan, Razack Ali and Dr. Hamza Rafeek. All of the four except Dr. Faud Khan have been given port folios in the UNC government with Mr. Basdeo Panday as the Prime Minister.

Government

Legislative power is vested in the bicameral Parliament, consisting of the Senate, with 31 members, and the House of Representatives, with 36 members. Representatives are elected for a five-year term by universal adult suffrage. The President is a constitutional Head of State, chosen by an electoral college of members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Members of the Senate are nominated by the President in consultation with, and on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The Cabinet has effective control of the Government and is responsible to Parliament. Tobago Island was granted its own House of Assembly in 1980 and given full internal self-government in January 1987. The Tobago House of Assembly has 15 members, of whom 12 are elected. The remaining three are selected by the majority party.

Economic Affairs

In 1991, according to estimates by the World Bank, Trinidad and Tobago's gross national product (GNP), measured at average 1989-91 prices, was US\$4,525m., equivalent to \$3,620 per head. During 1980-91, it was estimated, GNP decreased, in real terms, at an average annual rate of 3.9%, while real GNP per head decreased by 5.2% per year. Over the same period, the population increased by an annual average of 1.3%. Trinidad and Tobago's gross domestic product (GDP) decreased, in real terms, by an annual average of 4.7% in 1980-90.

Agriculture (including forestry, hunting and fishing) contributed 2.2% of GDP in 1990, and employed 7.3% of the working population in 1991. The principal cash crops are sugar cane, coffee, cocoa and citrus fruits. The fishing sector is small-scale, but is an important local source of food. There are substantial reserves of natural gas. Trinidad also has the world's largest supply of natural asphalt.

In 1991 Trinidad and Tobago recorded a visible trade surplus of US\$541.0 m. Other major trading partners are the United Kingdom, Canada and member countries of CARICOM. Trinidad and Tobago is a member of CARICOM and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Trinidad and Tobago's economy is largely based on its plentiful reserves of petroleum and natural gas.

Social Welfare

Old-age pensions are paid, and there is some unemployment relief. In 1990 there were 40 hospitals and nursing homes, with a total of 3,894 beds, and the country had 802 physicians. State medical services are free. In April 1972 the National Insurance System was inaugurated. The system is administered by an independent board, and its provisions are similar to those contained in the British system. Other social services include the provision of food stamps for the needy. Projected expenditure by the central Government in 1990 included TT\$547.2m. (10.0% of total spending) on health.

Education

Primary and secondary education is provided free of charge. Attendance at school is officially compulsory for children between five and 11 years of age. Primary education begins at the age of five and lasts for seven years. Secondary education, beginning at 12 years of age, lasts for up to five years, comprising a first cycle of three years and a second of two years.

Entrance to secondary schools is determined by the Common Entrance Examination. Many schools are administered jointly by the State and religious bodies. In 1990 an estimated 90% of children in the relevant age-group were enrolled at primary schools (males 90%; females 90%). In that year enrolment at secondary schools was equivalent to 80% of children in the relevant age-group (male 79%; females 82%). In 1990 the total enrolment at primary and secondary schools was equivalent to 90% of the school-age population (males 89%; females 90%). The Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies, at St. Augustine, includes an engineering faculty. Other institutions of higher education are the Polytechnic Institute and the East Caribbean Farm Institute. The country has a teacher training college and three government-controlled technical institutes and vocational centres.

POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUP
(1980 census, provisional)

	Males	Females	Total	%
African	216,790	217,940	434,730	41.08
Chinese	2,990	2,680	5,670	0.54
'East' Indian	215,680	210,980	426,660	40.31
Lebanese	520	490	1,010	0.10
Mixed	84,640	90,510	175,150	16.55
White	4,770	5,080	9,850	0.93
Other	1,480	1,420	2,350	0.22
Unknown	1,200	1,150	2,350	0.22
Total	528,070	530,250	1,058,320	100.00²

PRESENT SITUATION OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Muslims today live in mixed environments and not in fixed Muslim communities. They constitute between six and eight percent in a population of a grand total of 1.1 million³. Although African Muslims came to the islands of Trinidad and Tobago almost one century

² Central Statistical office, 23 Park Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

³ Ibid.

before the Indian Muslims. Indian Muslims currently out number African Muslims twenty to one.

Evident in the National Anthem of Trinidad and Tobago, "Here every creed and race find an equal place," the freedom to practice Islam is manifested in the Constitution. State laws make provision for Muslim marriages. Islamic organizations have been incorporated by law and government assistance is given to Muslim School Boards. Moreover, Muslims themselves hold meaningful positions in the government, the university and the judiciary.

Mr. Kamaluddin Mohammad, Mrs. Muriel Fatima Donawa Mc Davidson, Haji Sayeed Mohammed, Shaffie Shah and Shamshuddeen Mohammad all served as Government Ministers of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Hafiza Khan, the only Muslim female other than Donawa Mc. Davidson, was also a member of Parliament. The late Yusuf Jamada was solicitor general.

M.H. Shah officiated in Federal Parliament whilst Dr. Waffie Muhammad served as Senator and Haji Nizam Mohammed previously a Member of Parliament held the distinguished position of Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1986 to 1991. Dr. Wahid Ali, President of the Senate for 15 years, ultimately served as Acting President of the Republic on twenty different occasions.

Mr. Shamshudden Mohammad W.M. a Member of Parliament, in addition to Mr. Shahid Hosein and Mr. Hanif Mohammed. Mr. Asic Hassim, Mr. Mumtaz Hosein and Mr. Haidar Ali were all Senators.

Currently, two Muslims hold the notable positions of High Court Judges, Justice Shaffie Shah and Justice Clem Razac. Justice Zainool Hosein and Justice Mustapha Ibrahim are Court of Appeal Judges, whilst Gladys Gafoor is a female Judge in the Industrial Court. Muslim magistrates are Nazruddeen Khan, Kelvin Ali and Kamal ud deen.

Three former Court of Appeal Judges, Justice George Anthony Edoe, Justice Ralph Narine and Justice Noor Hassan Ali, now serve Trinidad and Tobago in completely different capacities. Justice Edoe is presently ombudsman, Justice Narine operates privately whilst Justice Hassan Ali is today President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Eversince the 1960's with the inception of the University of the West Indies, Muslim presence has been as evident as the existence of other religious bodies. Apart from Muslim

students who form a significant number of 200 in the total student population, Muslim lecturers and professors have played the role of educators.

Presently, there is Senator Haidar Ali in computer science, Dr. Nasser Mustapha (current President of the "Trinidad Muslim League") in sociology, Dr. I.A. Mac Doom in Physics, Dr. Haq in agriculture, Professor Nazir Ahmad in Soil Sciences and the campus registrar, Mr. Zaffar Ali is Muslim.

The University's Islamic Society emerged as early as 1969. A membership of essentially Muslim students, this body maintains an Islamic presence on the University campus and was voted in 1992 as one of two most active groups on campus. The group meets weekly for Islamic study sessions and apart from performing Salat al Jummah prayer together, with student representation of 60, other activities are hosting public lectures, an annual graduation dinner and displaying Islamic information at the University's library during the month of Ramadan in particular.⁴

The majority of Muslims in the government, the judiciary and university have involved in Islamic work, some in the formative years of Muslim institutions and organizations, others today in local jamaats and at organizational level.

Muslim presence in these areas manifests the secure place Muslims have made for themselves, where they have a voice in running the affairs of the country.

Freedom of Expression

In the 1960's the very first attempt at Islamic broadcasting was the brainchild of "The Islamic Missionaries Guild" spearheaded by Muhammad Kamruddeen Hosein and Yusuf Mitchell. No funds were in sight even at the outset to facilitate each seventy-five dollar half-hour radio programme at "Radio Trinidad." However, like every Islamic effort, this attempt at propagating Islam did manage to thrust its head. An old Muslim woman came forward and made a donation, enough to run the first broadcast⁵.

⁴ A detailed introduction of UWI Islamic Society will be given in Part IV.

⁵ Mansoor Ibrahim, "Islam in Trinidad and Tobago" in Muslims in the American Continent, edited by M.A. Kettani and A.M.M Bow, (Paris: Hariri Cultural Foundation), under press, p. 53.

These bulletins comprised of issues facing the Muslim community in Trinidad and the Caribbean. The programmes were well received although non-Muslims belonging to the radio station began issuing such threats that if the Muslims did not stop attacking Hosay (a national mockery of the Battle of Kerbala) they would be taken off the air.

For many years during the month of Ramadan the Muslim community has performed Da'wah via radio and television and for the occasion of Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha, programmes put together by Muslims and the media alike filter through the television screen.

Total, six Islamic programmes are transmitted weekly via radio, hosted by different Muslim organizations and sponsored by Muslim businessmen. They comprise the recitation of the Holy Quran with translation, Islamic propagation and songs.

Through non-Muslim publishing houses Muslims have the opportunity to voice their issues in the daily newspapers. Muslims' letters to newspaper editors are almost always published although articles written by Muslims, like most articles submitted to any medium seldom appear unedited and those submissions that appear in original form, are in most cases paid for.

The only medium that Muslims own is "Iqra Productions", founded by Fazila Khan and Zabar Baksh which was incorporated in 1988. Every Saturday morning from December 1987 "Focus on Islam", a half an hour of projecting Islam was aired through electronic media until July 1991. Muslims from various organizations merged to produce scripts. Donations from mainly Muslim businessmen whose business advertisements supplied the necessary funds of \$3,000.00 per programme led to a resounding success⁶.

At the outset, "Focus on Islam" was taped through "Trinidad and Tobago Television" a non-Muslim media house. However as funds accumulated, Muslims were able to purchase their own pieces of equipment at a value of \$70,000.00 and establish their own studio at a member's home.

The television broadcasts have ceased momentarily through a lack of adequate wherewithal to continue financing such a dynamic piece of work. Human participation required

⁶ Mansoor Ibrahim, op. cit. p. 54.

is full-time but the Muslims who have come forward can only volunteer part-time assistance and so all goals cannot be readily achieved.

"Iqra Productions" is however still active today. Recording elderly people who tell the tale of Islamic history in the Islands is one project this group is tackling apart from others. The members still meet on a weekly basis and all hope that someday, "Focus on Islam" will be back on the air.⁷

One renowned group of Indian Muslims have a monopoly on Indian radio and television programming in Trinidad and Tobago but their contribution is primarily for the purpose of Indian culture. Though their programmes sometimes commence with a Quranic verse, their energies are essentially targeted at Indians and they are responsible for fostering integration between Muslims and Hindus. At such a vantage point, it is unfortunate that their main concern is not promoting Islam. During my stay in Trinidad, I was informed about an Indian cultural programme aired from this radio, "Mustana Bahar" which was reportedly enthralling the Indian youth but at the same time "diluting the Islamicity of the Indian Muslims youth"⁸.

Women

Especially as East Indian children, and particularly females acquired secular education a long while after it was introduced, the Muslim woman's primary contribution to the wider community was lodged through her methods of cooking and dressing. Dishes she prepared from her native land such as "curried chicken" and "Daal pourrie" have become West Indian foods and quality Indian cuisine is now produced by many non-Indians.

Many Muslim women still wear "Indian" clothes and interestingly enough, the very concept of trousers for women in the west originated from the Muslim woman's "shalwar" outfit and the modern "Dhoti" and "Pellazo" trousers bear striking resemblance to Indian clothing⁹.

⁷ The writer has been informed by Mirza Ali Mohammad, an Islamic activist from Trinidad that UIO has recently decided to revive this program on T.V.

⁸ Interview with Manwar Aziz, Amir of Jamaat-al-Muttaqeen on February 2, 1995 at I-Calcutta Road, Trinidad.

⁹ Dr. Mansoor Ibrahim, p. 56.

The Muslim Woman in turn, adopted the Western wear, altering it to her religious scruples i.e. ensuring that it covered every part of her except her hands, face and feet.

Some of the first Muslim women who took jobs outside of the home abandoned the Muslim dress in preference of the Western style. Within recent times however, the Muslim woman's dress-consciousness has been reborn and so her identity is now better established. Trinidadian society respects the Islamic dress, which is evident in its presence at schools, universities and work places.

Muslim women have secured tertiary education and form integral pieces of the professional picture of Trinidad and Tobago. They merge today with the rest of society, equally educated and confident yet clad modestly, therefore retaining Islamic dignity.

Marriage and Polygamy

Muslim parents in Trinidad and Tobago arranged marriages for their children for years. Really a traditional practice, the couple in question met when negotiations were well under way or perhaps concluded. In all cases because of the Muslim marriage ceremony where consent is primary, all prospective marriage partners have had to make the ultimate choice.

At the end of World War II, Muslims here became more educated about the world around them and such habits changed. The concept of love which is emphasized in American society was also passed on to West Indian society and so today potential mates are selected without intermediaries, although up to 1957-58 marriages were arranged for the couples¹⁰.

And so the meeting of single Muslims has changed, but it must be understood that pre-marital sex is still considered un-Islamic and young Muslims of the opposite sex meet within a family setting. Since so many young Muslim women wear the Hijab, which represents much more than a head covering, chastity is still overwhelmingly crucial although the more enlightened couple of today wish to discuss various topics together.

In previous times, after the wedding, the newly married couple began living in their home at once but with changing times, Muslim couples, like most modern couples take the liberty of a "honeymoon".

¹⁰ R.J. Smith, Muslim East Indians in Trinidad: Retention of Ethnic Identity under Acculturative conditions, (Uni. of Pennsylvania: 1963). p. 105.

Marriage between Indian partners in the past led to the extended family where the married couple lived either with parents, and other close family members or both. In such a situation, the Muslim woman had to adapt to the "rules" that were already established for the household, and so conflict surfaced. When both marriage partners secured jobs which afforded them their own home, the nuclear family was born. The Muslim woman can now make the choices for her household. Her relationship with her in-laws and her husband's relationship with her family is thus very much improved.

The lack of stratification in the Muslim society is perhaps most evident in Muslim marriage since it is the norm for wealthy Muslim parents to consent to their daughters marrying into poor families, once husbands bear good characters and practice Islam¹¹.

Up to 1963 the dowry never exceeded \$250.00. But today the dowry has increased by leaps and bounds, but of course is still dependant on the husband's financial status.

Although members of "The Jamaat al Muslimeen" practice polygamy, the number of Indian Muslims here within a polygamous relationship has increased but in no significant number. The author had observed during the visit to Trinidad that a majority of the leaders of the Muslim community was providing polygamy.

Divorce

While the Muslim Divorce Court of 1961 functions smoothly in handling counselling and the actual divorce, ancillary relief such as maintenance, custody and property settlement is handled at High Court level in accordance with civil law. Whether Muslim males conform to the Islamic maintenance requirements or not, depends largely on the extent to which they follow Islamic principles.

The Muslim Divorce Court here admits to handling approximately twenty divorces per month but concede that ninety percent of these failed marriages are mixed marriages where Muslims who have married non-Muslims face incompatibility¹². Abuse from alcoholics or drug-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹² Dr. Mansoor Ibrahim, p. 59.

addicts is one reason women request divorce and the reality is that both Muslim men and women request divorce.

The Divorce Court consists of a chairman, really a lawyer advocating the law of the land, a secretary who files the divorce and two board members who maintain the Islamic point of view. Although Muslim women do not constitute the Divorce Court (but this is on the brink of being changed) they do appear as lawyers representing one of the persons requesting divorce. Counselling is available at the Muslim Divorce Court and since three months precedes the final divorce, a time frame is feasible for such advice which is fulfilled by religious leaders and Muslim marriage officers, often the very officer who officiated at the couple's wedding. The benefit of counselling is manifested in a change of heart between formerly conflicting marriage partners.

Muslim society treats the divorced Muslim with gentle sympathy, since the dissolution of marriage happened as a result of trying, possibly unlivable circumstances. The fact that the majority of divorced Muslims remarry, show that they still wish for the purity and security the institution of marriage provides.

Social Problems

Naturally, social problems carry part of the blame for broken homes and realistically, un-Islamic practices abound in this twin-island republic. Indiscriminate mixing, alcohol consumption, drug abuse, nakedness and criminal behaviour are evident here. Muslims coming to work, school or even mosques are faced with horrific and erotic behaviour yet by the grace of Allah, their religious consciousness has increased. Instead of pretending that immorality does not exist, Muslims have individually and at organizational level, adopted the middle course. They ensure that their voices are heard on all controversial matters and stay away from evil practices.

Some of these social problems do find their way into the lives of Muslim families as they do for other families of other religions, although no statistics have shown that the problems are more evident in Muslim families.

Muslim parents especially are alarmed about the goings-on in the wider community more so with the influential impact on the youth. The struggle to keep some of the youth from illicit behaviour remains an uphill one but today, the existence of so many Muslim organizations keep

the majority of the youth busy and many Muslims are searching for and discovering alternative forms of diversion for the younger generation.

The African Muslim Community

African nationals who embrace Islam today, believe they are returning to Islam. For some of them, "returning" means going back to the religion of their ancestors, to others, "returning" to the religion to which they were born.

Yusuf Mitchell, retired architect, is one of the first African Muslim in Trinidad to embrace Islam. He returned to Islam in 1950 through Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui. He spoke about his disillusionment, actually, disgust with life at the early age of twenty-three. With great emotion but simplicity he recounts the moving story of his conversion.

One night as he passed the Jama Masjid, a mosque nestled in the heart of the humming city of Port of Spain, which Mr. Mitchell formerly regarded as an "Indian temple" or "Indian Church", (these phrases emphasize that the Muslim community in Trinidad and Tobago up to that time was almost entirely Indian), he passed as Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui, a Pakistani missionary lectured. It was then that truth dawned on Yusuf Mitchell. This Islam, this religion belonged to everyone, every race in the world. He followed Maulana Siddiqui for months from mosque to mosque for lectures during which time he took Shahadah. He describes this period as the most beautiful turning point in his life and declares that Islam had become such a part of his blood that nothing could have turned him back¹⁵.

Vividly remembering the late Muhammad Ibrahim, an Indian Muslim who fostered him under his wing, a man who worked unconditionally for Allah's cause, Yusuf Mitchell concedes that had it not been for this man he may not be in the position he is in today.

Other African Muslims took Shahadah and at that time, only five or six Trinidadians were Muslim - Yousuf Mitchell, Muriel Donawa, Mahmood Rasool from Piparo, the late Desi, the late lawyer Placket and a man by the name of Brown from Laventille.

The Indian Muslims were at first skeptical about African Muslims. Lack of Islamic education can certainly be blamed because a true Islamic spirit warrants racial equality. Indian

¹⁵ ibid., p. 62.

Muslims felt that the Africans were entering Islam to take away their daughters, and their funds. Such intense fear therefore, sprang from a lack of education and understanding.

Gradually however, with education these tensions faded and today more integration is prevalent between Muslims of both races. Although Mr. Mitchell hastens to say that racial discrimination never existed in the Muslim community he believed that economic discrimination did. Islam has appealed mainly to the poor and not wealthy Africans, and so African Muslims in this country are undoubtedly disadvantaged.

The discrimination from their own families spurred on by their conversion causes sometimes, eviction from their homes. Unfortunately no economic machinery exists whereby these African Muslims can become self-sufficient and so many of them revert back to Jahiliyah¹⁴.

Within the context of their financial circumstances therefore, some of them are not presented with the opportunity to know the meaning of Islam in its purest sense. This unavailability of a means to getting jobs and thus sustenance causes some newly converted African Muslims to think along "Communist" lines where they believed that what others in the Muslim community have should also be theirs. Had the Muslim community established such an avenue where Muslims became financially independent, in their printeries and factories, the Islamic spirit would have been better.

In the 1970's "The Nation of Islam" which later became "The World community of Islam" was led by Elijah Muhammad of the United States. This internationally renowned group focused on the civil rights movement during the 1960's and one of the main forces was Malcolm X. A branch of this group was formed in Lavantille, Trinidad. The appeal was more racist than religious and many black freedom fighters joined. Power struggles led this group to become divided into "The Uskanuc Oartt", "The Jamaat al Muslimeen" and the Jamaat al Muminoon.

The continued projection of an "Indian" Islam has naturally led to a feeling of alienation amongst African Muslims. National Radio programmes hosted by Muslims who are viewed more as Indians than as Muslims in the eyes of the community have been instrumental in projecting Indian culture to the extent that the portrayal of anything Islamic is branded "Indian".

¹⁴ My interview with Mr. M.K. Houssein on February 5, 1995 in Trinidad.

However, Trinidad has the largest Muslim population in the Caribbean and larger number of Islamic bodies, organizations, institutions and groups which have influenced the life of the Muslim community to an appreciable extent.

ii) GUYANA

Guyana was formerly British Guiana, a colony of the United Kingdom, formed in 1831 from territories finally ceded to Britain by the Dutch in 1814. A new constitution, providing for universal adult suffrage, was introduced in 1953. The elections of 1953 were won by the left-wing People's Progressive Party (PPP), led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan. In October 1953, the British Government suspended the constitution and appointed an interim administration. The PPP splitted in 1955, and in 1957 some former members founded a new party the Peoples National Congress (PNC), under the leadership of Forbes Burnham. The PNC draws its support mainly from the African descended population, while PPP's support comes largely from the East Indian Community¹⁵. In the elections of December 1964, held under the system of proportional representation which had been introduced in the previous year, the PPP won the largest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly, but not a majority.

A coalition government was formed by the PNC and the United Force (TUF), with Burnham as Prime Minister. This Coalition led the colony to independence, as Guyana, on May 26, 1966. In October 1980, Burnham declared himself executive President of Guyana and a new constitution was promulgated and the elections were announced in December, 1980. All opposition parties except the PPP and TUF urged their supporters to boycott the December 1980 election to the National Assembly. The PNC, under Burnham received 77.7% of the votes, according to official results, and won 41 out of 53 seats, although allegations of substantial electoral malpractice were made. Burnham died in August 1985 and was succeeded as President by Desmond Hoyte.

In the last elections of October, 1992, Dr. Cheddi Jagan's PPP secured 32 of the 65 elective seats in the National Assembly (53.3% of the votes), while the PNC secured 31 seats (42.3%). The result which signified an end to the PNC's 28 year period in government,

¹⁵ The Europa World Year Book, 1992, Vol. I, 33rd edition, (London: Europa Publication Limited, 1992), p. 1293.

provoked riots by mainly Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters in George town. International Observers, were, however, satisfied that the elections had been fairly conducted, and on October 9 Dr. Cheddi Jagan took office as President. The new government has stated its priorities as overcoming the problem of external debt, reducing the cost of living and improving social services¹⁶.

Economic Conditions

In Guyana, the period from independence in 1966 to mid-1988 was characterized by economic and social decline caused by misdirected government policies and an over-extended role of the state. Real GDP grew at only 0.4 percent per annum on average -- less than population growth. Economic performance worsened significantly during the 1980s. Demand management policies were expansionary, the economy lost competitiveness, external balances came under pressure, and the government relied increasingly on price controls and quantitative restrictions on trade. This further reduced overall economic activity, while spawning a parallel market for foreign exchange that fed inflation. The country's infrastructure became dilapidated, real incomes dropped sharply, poverty increased, and the government became increasingly unable to provide basic social services.

To reverse the course of the previous preceding 20 years, in mid-1988 the government launched an economic recovery program (RRP) of broad adjustment measures and structural reforms to establish a market oriented economy. The economy has responded well to the inflation.

In the World Bank sponsored Workshop on Poverty and Human Development in Guyana held on April 13-15, 1994 at Georgetown, economic condition of the country and people was discussed at length. Some of the findings of the workshop are as follows:

1. Notwithstanding the rapid economic recovery, poverty prevails. The government's capacity to deliver essential services has virtually collapsed. Infrastructure remains severely dilapidated. The supply of potable water is limited to a small proportion of the population, drainage and irrigation systems have deteriorated to the point that they are no longer useful, and

¹⁶ ibid.

health and education services have become so inadequate that social indicators for the country have fallen to among the lowest in the Caribbean.

2. The prolonged economic and social decline under "cooperative socialism" has left approximately 20 percent of the population living in poverty. Roughly two-thirds of the poor or 29 percent of the population can be further classified as extremely poor, with expenditure levels below that required to purchase a minimum low cost diet.

3. Poor households tend to have more children and have attained lower levels of education than non poor household. This fact is not surprising, given the high correlation between education levels and living standards. Levels of poverty are similar among male and female headed households, indicating that a female headship is not an effective criterion for targeting poor households. Overall, female labor force participation is only about half that of meant with the majority of women involved primarily in domestic work. Across ethnic groups, the incidence of poverty is highest for the Amerindian population, though significant among the Afro-Guyanese, Indo Guyanese and racially mixed households.

4. The consumption patterns of the poor differ markedly from the non-poor, particularly in the proportion of total expenditures spent on food; 70 percent of the household budget is spent on food in the poorest households, while only 39 percent in the higher income ones. Home-grown food and international remittances from friends and relatives abroad has helped some Guyanese cope with poverty. Overall, 35 percent of households report receiving some form of international remittances which accounts for 33 percent of their total household income.

President of Guyana Mr. Cheddi Jagan in his opening address at the above referred Workshop said,

"In Guyana, both internal and external factors inspired to drag the country into that grouping of nations which are poorest in the world. The foreign debt, unfair prices and trading practices, capital flight and an un-ending culture of aid donors to force poor nations to accept unrealistic conditionalities."

At the World Bank sponsored workshop on Poverty and Human Development in Guyana Cheddi Jagan continues, "There are varying statistics on the poverty situation here. It is largely believed, however, that about 50% of our people experience an unacceptably poor existence, both in Urban and rural areas. The situation, from my own knowledge, is even more distressing

in Amerindian and Hinterland Communities. This situation of poverty is further deteriorating".

About 80% of Guyana's resources are used for paying debts which on the other hand, makes it difficult for the Government to pay salaries and wages. The wage rates too are not as high as in other Caribbean countries. So, Guyana is in a fix.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

All governments in Guyana since independence have expressed a commitment to guaranteeing broad access to health and education to every citizen. However, in the absence of economic management, progress in fulfilling this commitment has become difficult to achieve. In the late 1960s the government began to subsidize all education and health services; private providers were absorbed into the public system, and user charges, customarily levied by all public sector health care facilities to cover part of operating costs, were abolished. With the growing economic difficulties in the 1970s and 1980s, the government became unable to meet its commitments. Faced with deteriorating public finances, resources allocated to the social sectors decreased during the 1980s from 10 percent of GDP in 1980 to 5 percent in 1992.

Declining government resources have made it impossible to maintain standards. The quality of health and education services provided through the public system has deteriorated sharply. Because operations and maintenance were virtually suspended for 20 years, the physical infrastructure is either totally beyond repair or requires comprehensive rehabilitation. Materials and equipment are invariably insufficient, broken or absolute. Resources have not been enough to adequately compensate teachers, health workers, and social sector civil servants. A combination of poor working conditions and low salaries has caused skilled workers to leave the social sectors and work in the private sector or at jobs abroad. As a result the ministries of health and education are understaffed at all levels, inhibiting their capacity for planning, budgeting, and implementing sectoral policies. Guyana's education and health indicators are now among the lowest in the Caribbean region.

Access to Social Services

Access to basic education and health services is high across all welfare groups in Guyana. In the poorest quintile, 98 percent of children under the age of 11 attend school, while approximately two thirds of the poorest income group seek health care for illness or injury.

Equality of access to **quality** services is, however, not as universal. The poor limited by welfare and geographic constraints, have been particularly affected by the decline in the quality of education and health services offered through the public system. They cannot afford to seek the improved services now offered by the private sector, and largely live in rural areas where only the lower level of services is available. For example, the nationwide shortage of qualified primary school teachers is most acutely felt in the rural interior areas, where poverty is highest. In 1990, 38 percent of primary school teachers were unqualified or untrained,. In health, the ratio of trained physicians per person is 1:2,500.

Improvements in the quality of education, health and nutrition are urgently required to reverse the 20-year deterioration in services. Improving quality will require increased investment, a more efficient use of existing resources, a strengthening of institutional capacity, and better provision of essential medicines and learning materials. These efforts must also ensure that the poor benefit equitably from the improved living conditions.

iii) **EDUCATION**

Guyana's education system provides for nursery school, six years of primary school, four to six years of secondary school, and between three and four years of higher academic or pre vocational education. With schooling mandatory up to the age of 14 1/2, all students should complete primary school and at least two years of secondary education. The secondary school system is divided into three subsystems; General Secondary Schools (GSS), Community High Schools (CHS), and Secondary Departments of Primary Schools ("primary tops"). A student's entry into these schools depends on the scores received on the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE). Those with scores in the top 2 percent are eligible for the President's College, an elite residential school with an enrollment in 1993 of approximately 300. Others who score within the top 40 percent are admitted to the General Secondary Schools. The remainder of students attend either the vocational-oriented community high schools or remain in secondary departments of primary schools. Though the "primary tops" supposedly have a secondary curriculum, most repeat their primary curriculum. Students who do not take the exam (a minority) have no option but to continue in the secondary departments of their primary schools.

Entrance to tertiary level education depends on the type of secondary school attended and scores attained in Caribbean-wide examinations. Students from community high schools can pursue technical level courses at vocational and technical colleges. General academic graduates are able to attend either the Cyril Potter Teacher Training College or the University of Guyana.

The education system was decentralized in 1985 so that the ten Regional Administrations now hold much of the responsibility for providing education. They construct and maintain schools in their jurisdictions, allocate resources to different school sites and levels, recruit and pay teachers, and ensure that schools operate in accordance with regional and national objectives. The Ministry of Education and Culture's (MEC) principal functions are to monitor educational indicators across regions so that large variations in education quality do not arise, to procure and deliver textbooks to all schools, to coordinate key primary and secondary school examinations, and to control the operation of schools in the central Georgetown area. Most of the institutions of higher education also fall under the responsibility of the ministry.

Until 1992 regulations prohibited private schools in Guyana. Since then, one private nursery/primary school has been opened and is reported to be full to capacity.

There is a big scope for Muslims to open schools in private sector but they don't look prepared to benefit from this opportunity.

As in the health sector, the neglect of investments in the education system over the past 20 years has resulted in a severe deterioration in the provision of services. The education system, once considered one of the finest in the Caribbean, is probably now the weakest. Today learning standards are low, a large proportion of the teaching staff is unqualified and untrained, there is a high teacher turnover, many schools are overcrowded, and textbooks and other teaching materials are rarely available. Most schools buildings are in an advanced state of disrepair and the majority do not have adequate sanitation and water. The decline in the education system has, in one way or another, affected all students.

Improvements in the access and quality of primary and secondary education will lead to increases in literacy and numeracy at all levels, with the biggest impact on the poor. Because the education system has been deteriorating gradually, it is realistic to expect that its rehabilitation, reform, and rebuilding will also take a substantial period to complete. The turnaround of the education system and its elevation back to the position it once held requires

long-term, programmatic commitments from government and donors alike. Without such commitments, the prospect becomes more remote that the education system will be able to produce the type of school graduates with the skills required to sustain economic growth and to distribute broadly and equitably the fruits of growth¹⁷.

SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE GUYANESE MUSLIMS

It was referred in the Chapter on indentureship (chapter-III) that Muslim workers had established 'cowshed' masjids in the plantation fields which, later on, developed into well built masjids following the relaxation in rules and regulations. Muslim's social life was organized around their local masjids. There was, however, a closer relationship among Muslims and Hindus on the same plantation than among Muslims from one plantation to the Muslims on the neighbouring plantation. Activities of the masjids were organized by Imams and the executive members of the Masjid Committee who were elected on the basis of their Islamic background, ability to provide consultation and leading role in social activities of the Muslims. Sometimes, the executives were chosen due to their influence either as persons of authority on the plantations or owners of property. In the second case, the Islamic criteria was secondary.

Islamic knowledge of Muslims in general and Imams in particular was not sound. Celebrations of Ta'zia to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain at Karbala had become almost an integral part of Muslim's life. Later, these celebrations were joined by the followers of other religions. It became an event for the purposeless youth who used this occasion for wine drinking and some other immoral activities. "Hindu rum-shop owners became the organizers of the Ta'zia celebration in which competitions among Hindus and Muslims were encouraged"¹⁸.

¹⁷ Information on poverty, social services and education have been summarized from the "World Bank sponsored workshop on Poverty and Human Development in Guyana" held on April 13-15, 1994 at Tower Hotel, Georgetown.

¹⁸ Guyana Situation Report 1995, (Georgetown:GIT, Lombard Street), p.3.

This practice continued until the 1920's when a group of devoted Muslims could no longer tolerate these immoralities in the name of Islam. Muslims organized "The Islamic Association of British Guiana" to combat the practices like Ta'zia. This Association launched a campaign for recognition of religious holidays on Yauman-Nabi and Eid al Adha as two Muslim holidays. Soon afterwards, the urban middle class, the businessmen and the Western educated Muslims assumed leadership of this Association¹⁹.

The Association started bringing out a magazine, "Nur-e-Islam" and published a book "Ta'leem al Islam" written by S. A. Nasir which continued as a standard text for the Guyanese Muslims for about four decades. In 1931, another Muslim organization "Sadr Anjuman-e-Islam" was founded. Recognition of Muslim's right by the government was one of its objectives in addition to arrange education for the Muslims. They were also required to visit the inmates in all the public institutions, to look after the needs of orphans and to inculcate a sense of loyalty to the British Crown.²⁰

In 1948, the Islamic Association and the Sadr Anjuman merged together to form the Guyana United Sadr Islamic Anjuman (GUSIA). In 1961, GUSIA was incorporated through the laws of Guyana as the body to represent the Muslim's interest. The Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) organized by Cheddi Jagan and Burnham in the late 1940's became the flag bearer of independence of Guyana. In 1953, it had a landslide victory²¹ in the elections. However, in the same year, the constitution was suspended and the PPP was ousted.

In 1955, the PPP was split into two factions, one supporting Jagan and whose name remained PPP and the other supporting Burnham whose name later changed to the Peoples National Congress (PNC).

With the intensification of the independence struggle, the Guyanese masses became totally involved, so too were the Muslims. With the split of the independence movement, the Muslims became divided and in the 1960s even the Guyana United Sadr Islamic Association (GUSIA)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Cheddi Jagan, The West on Trial, (Berlin: Seven Seas publisher; 1980), Revised edition, p.115.

became divided. There was one faction under Yakoob Ali who supported the PPP and another under Mohammed Nasir which supported the PNC. This situation continued until the late 1970's. During this period, there were bitter battles between these two factions and Muslims once again lost their leadership.

This situation led to the formation of many groups, all calling for unity and brotherhood. Between 1945 and 1975 several groups were formed within the Muslim community. These were the Islamic Missionaries Guild (1950s), the Muslim Youth Organization of Guyana (1950s), Jamiat Ulamaa-e-Deen (1960s), the Guyana United Muslim Party (GUMP) a political party (1960s), Berbice Islamic Sunnatul Anjuman (1970s), General Council of Islamic Brotherhood (1970s), the Guyana Muslim Mission (1970s) etc. These groups imparted a little impact on the Muslim Community. Most of these groups are presently dormant²².

In 1962, the Muslim Education Trust College was formed as an Islamic Educational Institution. Its basic purpose was to have an Islamic curriculum as part of the syllabus. However, it was unable to do so. When schools were nationalised in Guyana in 1976, it became fully under government's control and was renamed as Brickdam Secondary School.

In 1976, the Guyana government under Burnham leadership wanted to make National Service compulsory for all Guyanese youths, male and female. This required of the people to leave their homes and go to the hinterland region to have military and other training. The greatest fear of the Guyanese people was the immorality to which their children would be exposed.²³ The Muslims realizing the great harm of this venture, such as immorality, eating and drinking of haraam food and the indoctrination in Marxism, protested. Since the national Muslim Organisations were in disarray the Muslims had to act by themselves. Subsequently they gathered at the Queenstown Masjid in Georgetown to lead their protest. Because of the large gathering, Burnham sent troops to the Masjid to threaten the Muslims.

Some Shia customs and beliefs have been practiced in Guyana from as early as the time of the Indian Immigrants. The Ta'zia festival was last held in 1932. But even until this day,

²² Rauf Zaman, ex-Murshid GFT, personal interview with the writer on Dec. 21, 1994.

²³ Ibid.

several 'Sunni' jamaats (Masjid communities) read stories of Hasan and Hussain (R.A.H.) to mark Yaumul Ashura. These Imams, being influenced by the Shia Urdu literature that came in this country from India and Pakistan in the early twentieth century, consider it haram to have weddings and other celebrations in Muharram.

With this background, it was easy for a Shia group to get roots in Guyana in the year of the Iranian Revolution. With less than a dozen families in as many years, the group has since last year acquired the services of a qualified missionary. They are apparently concentrating their efforts on the Afro Guyanese so far and have begun to see development, with the group now about seventy members strong. The Shia group received a boost a while ago with its local leader Abdul Kadir, having been appointed mayor of Linden, a small mining town, on the ticket of the opposition P.N.C.

JAMAICA

Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean Sea, lying 145 km (90 miles) to the south of Cuba and 160 km (100 miles) to the south-west of Haiti. The climate varies with altitude, being tropical at sea-level and temperate in the mountain areas. The official language is English, although a local patois is widely spoken. The majority of the population belong to Christian denominations, the Church of God being the most numerous.

Recent History

Jamaica became a British colony in 1655. Slaves, transported from Africa to work on the sugar plantations, formed the basis of the island's economy until the abolition of slavery in 1834. Plans for independence were made in the 1940s. Internal self-government was introduced in 1959, and full independence, within the Commonwealth, was achieved on 6 August 1962.

The early 1970s were marked by escalating street violence and crime, with gang warfare rife in the slum areas of Kingston. Despite the unrest high unemployment and severe economic stagnation, the People's National Party (PNP) was returned to power in December 1976 with an increased majority. In February 1980, with a worsening economic crisis, Michael Manley rejected the stipulation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that economic austerity measures be undertaken, as a condition of its making further loans to Jamaica. He called a general election to seek support for his economic policies and his decision to end dependence on the IMF. The electoral campaign was one of the most violent in Jamaica's history. In the

October election the JLP received about 57% of the total votes and won 51 of the 60 seats in the House of Representatives. Edward Seaga, the leader of the JLP, became Prime Minister; who supported closer political and economic links with the USA and the promotion of free enterprise. Seaga severed diplomatic relations with Cuba in October 1981, and secured valuable US financial support for the economy. Negotiations on IMF assistance were also resumed.

In November 1983, Seaga announced that an election would take place in December. Only four days were allowed for the nomination of candidates, and the PNP, unable to present candidates at such short notice, refused to participate and declared the elections void. The JLP, opposed in only six constituencies (by independent candidates), won all 60 seats in the House of Representatives and formed a one-party legislature. The PNP embarked upon a programme of extra parliamentary opposition to the JLP Government.

In September 1988 Jamaica was struck by Hurricane Gilbert, the most damaging storm in the country's recorded history. More than 100,000 homes were destroyed, while the economy, particularly agriculture, was severely disrupted. Seaga's successful efforts to secure international aid won him some initial support, but this soon declined, particularly following controversy over the alleged preferential allocation of relief resources to JLP supporters.

After a brief, and relatively peaceful campaign, a general election took place in February 1989. The PNP received about 56% of the votes cast, thereby securing 45 of the 60 seats in the House of Representatives. Michael Manley, who had developed a more moderate image during his years in opposition, again became Prime Minister. The cost of living continued to rise, prompting industrial unrest in late 1991 (particularly in the public sector, in which workers were demanding substantial wage increases). In March 1992 Manley announced his resignation, owing to ill health, from the premiership and from the presidency of the PNP. Paterson was subsequently elected as Manley's successor by members of the PNP, and was appointed Prime Minister. During 1992 there was a marked increase in violent crime, much of which appeared to politically motivated.

Prior to his re-election as Prime Minister in February 1989, Michael Manley announced his intention of maintaining good relations with the USA. However, relations between the two countries have been hampered by persistent demands by the USA for the eradication of Jamaica's marijuana crop. In July 1990 diplomatic relations with Cuba were resumed, and it was

also announced in that year that the Government intended to strengthen diplomatic relations with Latin American and Asian countries.

Government

The Head of State is the British monarch, who is represented locally by the Governor-General, who is appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The Governor-General acts, in almost all matters, on the advice of the Cabinet. Legislative power is vested in the bicameral Parliament: the Senate, with 21 appointed members, and the House of Representatives, with 60 elected members. Thirteen members of the Senate are appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister and eight on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition. Members of the House are elected by universal adult suffrage for five years (subject to the dissolution). Executive power lies with the Cabinet.

Economic Affairs

In 1991, according to estimates by the World Bank, Jamaica's gross national product (GNP), measured at average 1989-91 prices, was US\$3,365m., equivalent to \$1,380 per head. Between 1980 and 1991 GNP was estimated to have increased, in real terms, by an average of 1.0% per year, but, over the same period, the population had increased by an annual average of 1.2%. GNP per head, therefore, was estimated to have declined by an average of 0.3% per year. Jamaica is a founding member of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), of the Inter-American Development Bank.

Education

Primary education is compulsory in certain districts, and free education is ensured. The education system (which begins at six years of age) consists of a primary cycle of six years, followed by two secondary cycles of three and four years respectively. In 1989 about 99% of children in the relevant age-group were enrolled at primary schools. Secondary enrolment in 1988 was 59% (males 55%; females 62%). In 1990 an estimated 1.6% of the adult population had received no schooling. Higher education is provided by technical colleges and by the University of the West Indies, which has five faculties situated at its Mona campus in Kingston. Expenditure on education, training and cultural development by the central Government in the financial year 1990/91 was estimated to be J \$1,524.8m., about 14% of total expenditure.

Fundamental Rights and Freedom

The Constitution includes provisions safeguarding the fundamental freedoms of the individual, irrespective of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, subject only to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest. The fundamental freedoms include the rights of life, liberty, security of the person and protection from arbitrary arrest or restriction of movement, the enjoyment of property and the protection of the law, freedom of conscience, of expression and of peaceful assembly and association, and respect for private and family life.

Christianity

There are more than 100 Christian denominations active in Jamaica. According to the 1982 census, the largest religious bodies were the Church of God, Baptists, Anglicans and Seventh-day Adventists. Other denominations include the Methodist and Congregational Churches, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Disciples of Christ, the Moravian Church, the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends (Quakers).

The Anglican Communion

Anglicans in Jamaica are adherents of the Church in the Province of the West Indies, comprising eight dioceses. The Archbishop of the Province is the Bishop of the North East Caribbean and Aruba. The 1982 census recorded 154,548 Anglicans.

The Roman Catholic Church

Jamaica comprises the archdiocese of Kingston in Jamaica (also including the Cayman Islands), the diocese of Montego Bay and the Apostolic Vicariate of Mandeville. On 31 December 1991 the estimated total of adherents in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands was 93,398, representing about 3.9% of the total population.

Other Christian Churches

Assembly of God, Baptist Union, Church of God in Jamaica, First Church of Christ, Scientist, Methodist Church (Jamaica District), Seventh-day Adventist Church and United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman.

Rastafarianism

Rastafarianism is an important influence in Jamaican culture. The cult is derived from Christianity and a belief in the divinity of Ras (Prince) Tafari Makonnen (later Emperor Haile

Selassie) of Ethiopia. It advocates racial equality and non-violence, but causes controversy by the use of 'ganja' (marijuana) as a sacrament. The 1982 census recorded 14,249 Rastafarians (0.7% of the total population). Although the religion is largely unorganized, there are some denominations.

Baha'i Faith

National Spiritual Assembly incorporated in 1970 has 6,300 members resident in 368 localities of Jamaica.

Judaism

The 1982 census recorded 412 Jews.

Islam in Jamaica

The first Muslims came from Africa as enslaved victims in the 16th century. There is evidence to show that these Muslims struggled hard to preserve their Islam but were treated extremely harshly by their slave masters, which eventually led to their complete deislamization. The second batch came as indentured labourers in the 19th century from the Indian Sub continent.

Most of today's Muslims, however, are first generation Muslims who came into the fold of Islam as a result of the activities of the Nation of Islam that surfaced in the USA in the second part of the 20th century, under Elijah Muhammad.

Most of the Muslims in Jamaica are converts and like most other converts, they take Islam very seriously and implement it wholeheartedly in all its aspects. In particular prayers are taken very seriously and offered in congregation at their proper times. Fasting is also strictly observed by all Muslims. Because of their economic situations, most of them can only qualify as recipients of Zakat, not givers. The little that is collected is normally distributed by the Imams. Similarly, for the same reason, not many are able to perform the obligation of Hajj but many hope that they will eventually get the opportunities.

It is encouraging to note that all the Muslim communities are vigorously engaged in pursuing Islamic Education with the result that their level is commendable. The mosques are the centers of learning where different lessons for various segments of the society—children, youth, women and adults - take place. The lessons are taught by the Imams and other learned members of the community.

These teachers, in turn, are trained by the Islamic Council. The Council has been lucky for the past several years to have a Missionary sponsored by Dar ul-Ifta of Saudi Arabia. Earlier there was Abdullah Hakeem, a graduate of the Islamic University of Madina, who played a prominent role in uniting various groups, forming the Council and laying down a strong educational foundation. He has since moved to Toronto and was replaced by Sheikh Camara, another capable scholar who also graduated from the Islamic University of Madina. As far as secular education is concerned, most Muslims have completed primary schools since it is compulsory by law but few have gone beyond that.

The Muslims in Jamaica are extremely poor. More than half of them are unemployed and thus barely able to make both ends meet. When they were asked why this was so, it was informed that the harsh economic conditions in the country were a contributing factor but that the more important factor was that most of the Muslims are reluctant to work because they considered most jobs to be incompatible with the teachings of Islam and thus illegal sources of sustenance²⁴.

As a consequence of the general poverty of the people, the entire communities and the Islamic Council itself have no source of financing for both their capital and recurrent expenses. Indeed, they are badly in debt with no easy means of paying them off.

Worse still they do not have any properties, that they can call their own. It was extremely sad to hear that none of the six mosques in the whole country except one belonged to the Muslim community. Masjid Bilal, itself, the Headquarters of the Council was being rented. Most of the other mosques were made of corrugated iron sheets and bamboo sticks and were on land which did not belong to Muslims²⁵.

There is no Muslim holding a prominent government position and thus no one to raise issues of concern to the Muslims with the Government. With respect to legal affairs, the laws of the country are of course secular and un-Islamic. Fortunately, the Government allows Islamic marriages to be contracted and has appointed a number of Muslim marriage officers. However,

²⁴ IIFSO, Situation Report on the Caribbean, (Jamaica, Kingston, May 30, 1987), pp. 26-27.

²⁵ Ibid., p.27

polygamy is not allowed. Also, Muslims are given the right to be buried according to Islamic practices and can write their wills according to Islamic Law.

BARBADOS

Barbados is the most easterly of the Caribbean islands, lying about 320 km (200 miles) north-east of Trinidad. There is a rainy season from July to November and the climate is cool during the rest of the year. The mean annual temperature is about 20°C(78°F). The language is English. Almost, all of the inhabitants profess Christianity, but there are small groups of Hindus, Muslims and Jews. The largest, denomination is the Anglican church, but about 90 other Christian sects are represented. The capital is Bridgetown. Barbados was formerly a British colony. Barbados achieved full internal self government in October 1961. An election in December 1961 was won by the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), formed in 1955 by dissident members of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). When Barbados achieved independence on 30 November 1966, Errol Barrow became the island's first Prime Minister, having won another election earlier in the month. The DLP retained power in 1971, but in the general election of September 1976 the BLP, led by J.M.G.M. Adams ended Barrow's 15 year rule.

At a general election in June 1981 the BLP was returned to office, owing mainly to its economic achievements in government, with 17 of the 27 seats in the newly-enlarged House of Assembly. The remainder of the seats were won by the DLP. Adams died suddenly in March 1985 and was succeeded as Prime Minister by his deputy, Bernard St John, a former leader of the BLP. At a general election in May 1986 the DLP won a decisive victory receiving 59.4% of the total votes and winning 24 seats in the House of Assembly.

At a general election in January 1991 the DLP received 49.8% of the total votes and won 18 of the 28 seats in the recently-enlarged House of Assembly, while the BLP secured the remaining 10. However, only 62% of the electorate participated in the poll. As a result of serious economic problems, legislation providing for the introduction of a serious austerity measures was narrowly approved by Parliament in September. However, the proposals attracted severe criticism and demands for Prime Minister's resignation, and in October large demonstrations, protesting against the measures, took place in Bridgetown. Strikes and protests continued in 1992, as large numbers of civil servants and agricultural workers were made redundant under the austerity programme.

Relations with Trinidad and Tobago were strained between 1982 and 1985 by publicly-stated differences over the intervention in Grenada, and by Trinidad and Tobago's imposition of import restrictions. Moves towards a Caribbean internal market continued, despite political differences and trade tension with the OECS in late 1987. In 1988 relations with Jamaica were strained over the approach to events in Haiti, and Barbadian pressure for closer integration with CARICOM.

Executive power is vested in the British monarch, represented by a Governor-General, who acts on the advice of the Cabinet. The Governor-General appoints the Prime Minister and, on the latter's recommendation, other members of the Cabinet. Legislative power is vested in the bicameral Parliament, comprising a Senate of 21 members, appointed by the Governor General, and a House of Assembly with 28 members.

Economic Affairs

In 1990, according to estimates by the World Bank, the island's gross national product (GNP), measured at average 1988-90 prices, was US\$1,680m., equivalent to US\$6,540 per head. Between 1980 and 1990, it was estimated, GNP increased, in real terms, at an average annual rate of 1.7%, while GNP per head increased by 1.4% per year. Over the same period, the population increased by 0.3% per year. Between 1980 and 1988, Barbados' gross domestic product (GDP), at factor cost, increased, in real terms, by an annual average of 1.1%.

Service industries are the main sector of the economy accounting for 76.1% of GDP in 1989 and 74.5% of employment in 1991. Tourism made a direct contribution of 11.8% to GDP in 1988. Tourism and trade employed 24.7% of the working population in 1991. In 1991 Barbados recorded a visible trade deficit of US\$474m. For the financial year ending 31 March 1993 there was a projected total budgetary deficit (including both current and capital expenditure) of Bds \$175.5m.

Political stability and consensus have contributed to the economic strengths of Barbados. Successive Governments have attempted to broaden the economic base of the island. Services remain the principal sector of the economy and are dominated by tourism, but offshore banking has been developed, particularly since the mid 1980s. Another successful 'shore' industry that has been officially encouraged is data processing, mainly for US firms. Sugar remains the principal agricultural export, however, production declined dramatically in the early 1990s, and

in 1982 some 10,000 metric of sugar tons had to be imported to satisfy domestic demand. Worsening economic conditions prompted the Prime Minister to introduce, in September 1991, a programme of austerity measures, including reductions in public spending, redundancies for 2,000 workers reduction in public sector and the imposition of new taxes.

A social security scheme was established in 1967. Old-age pensions and unemployment insurance are available. The Government has also created a building scheme of group housing for lower-income families. In 1982 Barbados had 11 hospital establishments, with a total of 2,151 beds, and in 1989 there was one physician for every 2,400 inhabitants on the island. Of total expenditure by the central Government in the 1980/90 financial year, Bds \$135.6m.

Education

Education is compulsory for 11 years, between five and 16 years of age. Primary education begins at the age of five and lasts for six years. Secondary education, beginning at 11 years of age, also lasts for six years, divided into two equal cycles. Enrolment of children in the primary age-group was 99% in 1982. The adult literacy rate was believed to be 98% in 1985. In 1986 there were 126 primary and secondary schools, six senior schools, a community college, a teacher training college, a theological college, a technical institute and a polytechnic. Degree courses in arts, law, education, natural sciences and social sciences are offered at the Barbados branch of the University of the West Indies. Expenditure on education by the central Government in the 1989/90 financial year was Bds \$211.9m (18.6% of total spending)

AREA AND POPULATION

Area: 430 sq. km. (166 sq miles).

Population: 252,029 (males 119,655, females 132,364) at census of 12 May 1980; 257,082 (provisional) at census of 2 May 1990.

Density (May 1990): 597.9 per sq km.

Ethnic Groups (de jure population, excl. persons resident in Institutions, 1980 census): Africans 224,565; White 7,953; Mixed race 6,362; Total (incl. others) 244,228.

More than 90 religious denominations and sects are represented in Barbados, but the vast majority of the population profess Christianity. According to the 1980 census, there were 96,894 Anglicans (or some 40% of the total population), while the Pentecostal (8%) and Methodist (7%)

churches were next in importance. The regional Caribbean Conference of Churches is based in Barbados. There are also small groups of Hindus and Jews.

JUDAISM

Jewish Community: There were approximately 100 Jews in Barbados in 1992.

HINDUISM

Hindu Community: There were 411 Hindus at the census of 1980.

Muslims of Barbados

After the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean in the 19th Century, many Indians were imported as indentured labourers to fill in the gap created by the newly freed African slaves. Slaves in Barbados opted to remain on the plantations and so these indentured labourers were brought mainly into Guyana, Trinidad and Surinam²⁶.

Among the Indians brought to Trinidad and Guyana were several Muslims from West Bengal. They did not lose contact with their relatives at home and in the early 1920s some of these relatives arrived in Barbados after learning of the better economic prospects in these islands. These early immigrants who were farmers but after arriving in Barbados became small businessmen. Another wave of Gujrati Muslims came to Barbados through French Guiana and British Guiana. These Muslims who were working on the cargo boats were employed by the Bengali Muslims to teach their children about Islam. These Muslims in turn called their relatives from British Guiana and so began the earliest settlement of Gujerati Muslims.

During the 1960s we saw the arrival of another group of Muslims in Barbados. These were professionals who were either recruited by the government or those who were employed in the private sector. On a social level, two Islamic organizations were established in the 1960s: The Barbados Muslim Association and later the Barbados Muslim Welfare Association. The Muslim Community of Barbados is rich. It contributes to the Islamic work generously. There are six medical doctors who enjoy good repute in the Barbadian society. There are two big mosques and one Islamic Centre called Islamic Teaching Centre of Barbados (ITCB).

²⁶ The Barbados Advocate, special Eid ul Adha feature, Friday, May 20, 1994, p. 4B.

An ITCB editorial Committee prepares frequent releases published in the local press about socio-cultural issues like Hijab, Casino, pornography, etc. It publishes a weekly column, called "Muslim View", in one of the local Sunday newspapers on Islam and matters relating to Muslims in general.

To keep the Muslim youth away on Carnival weekends (February) of each year, ITCB organizes parallel programmes for both brothers and sisters.

In the socio-economic field, ITCB has established a multi-purpose co-op for Muslims and a Muslim Credit Union. It trains youth and finances them to start them off in business or trade as to protect them against joblessness. It also involves the Muslim youth and the new Muslims in the halal meat business.

In September 1990, the Barbados Muslim community was faced with a Hijab controversy similar to that of France. A 15 year old Muslim girl who went to school with head scarf was stopped from attending the class. It was widely debated in the press. Eventually, the Ministry of Education granted permission to the Muslim girl to attend the classes with her headscarf and the court also ruled in her favour.

The Barbados Muslim Community is flourishing economically and numerically. It grows through three means: natural growth, immigration, and conversion. The richer Indian Muslims need to uplift the Afro Barbadian new Muslims economically and socially.

THE BAHAMAS

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas consists of about 700 islands and more than 2,000 cays and rocks, extending from east of the Florida coast of the USA to just north of Cuba and Haiti, in the West Indies. The main islands are New Providence, Grand Bahama, Andros, Eleuthera and Great Abaco. More than 60% of the population reside on the island of New Providence. The remaining members of the group are known as the 'Family Islands'. A total of 29 of the islands are inhabited. The climate is mild and sub-tropical, with average in temperatures of about 30°C (86°F) in summer and 20°C (68°F) in winter. The official language is English. Most of the inhabitants profess Christianity, the largest denominations being the Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches. The capital is Nassau, on the island of New Providence.

A former British colonial territory, the Bahamas attained internal self-government in January 1964 although the parliamentary system dates back to 1729. Following a constitutional conference in September, 1968, the Bahamas Government was given increased responsibility for internal security, external affairs and defense in May 1969. In the elections of September 1972, which were dominated by the issue of independence, the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) maintained its majority. Trading in illicit drugs, mainly for the US market, has become a major problem for the country, since many of the small islands and cays are being used by drug-traffickers in their smuggling activities. According to estimates by the US Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration, some 60% of cocaine and 50% of marijuana entering the USA between the early 1970s and the early 1990s passed through the Bahamas. In 1983 allegations were made of widespread corruption, and the abuse of Bahamian bank secrecy laws by drug-financiers and US tax evaders. These claims were denied by the Prime Minister Piddling, who announced, in November 1983, the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate thoroughly all aspects of the drug trade in the Bahamas. The Commission's hearings revealed the extent to which money deriving from the drug trade had permeated Bahamian social and economic affairs. The Commission also revealed that Piddling had received several million dollars in gifts and loans from business executives, although the Commission stated that there was no evidence that the payments were drug-related. The opposition FNM organized demonstrations demanding Piddling's resignation, but the Prime Minister refused to accept any personal responsibility for corruption by public officials, and the PLP convention at the end of October unanimously endorsed Piddling as party leader.

An early general election was held in June 1987. The issue of the illegal drug trade and of drug-related corruption within the Government dominated the campaign, but the PLP was returned to power for a fifth consecutive term, obtaining 53% of the total votes and winning 31 of the 49 seats in the enlarged House of Assembly. Statistics relating to crime in 1987 indicated unprecedented levels of violent and drug-related offenses.

The Bahamas' traditionally close relationship with the USA has been strained by the increasingly aggressive attitudes of the US Government towards the bank secrecy laws and the drug-smuggling in the islands. In July 1988 the Bahamas led a protest by members of the

Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) against attempts by the USA to impose its extraterritorial jurisdiction on small neighbours.

Government

Legislative power is vested in the bicameral Parliament. The Senate has 16 members, of whom nine are appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister, four by the Leader of the Opposition and three after consultation with the Prime Minister. The House of Assembly has 49 members, elected for five years (subject to dissolution) by universal adult suffrage. Executive power is vested in the British monarch, represented by a Governor-General, who is appointed on the Prime Minister's recommendation and who acts, in almost all matters, on the advice of the Cabinet.

Economic Affairs

In 1990, according to estimates by the World Bank, the Bahamas' gross national product (GNP), measured at average 1988-90 prices, was US\$2,913m., equivalent to US\$11,510 per head (the highest level among Caribbean countries).

Service industries constitute the principal sectors of the economy. The Bahamas established its own shipping registry, in 1976, and by 1983 had one of the largest open-registry' fleets in the world. The country is also a leading 'offshore' financial centre, and banking is the second most important economic activity. Tourism is the predominant sector of the economy, directly accounting for about 54% of GDP in 1985, and employing some 43% of the working population. About 90% of tourists are from the USA, although attempts are being made further to attract the European market in order to reduce dependence on the region.

Education

Education is compulsory between the ages of five and 14 years, and is provided free of charge in government schools. There is an extensive primary and secondary school system, with 138 schools in 1990. There are several private and denominational schools. Primary education begins at five years of age and lasts for six years. Secondary education, beginning at the age of 11, also lasts for six years and is divided into two equal cycles. The University of the West Indies has an extra-mural department in Nassau, offering degree courses in hotel management and tourism. Government expenditure on education in 1988 was B \$109.3m. (or 20.7% of total government spending).

STATISTICAL SURVEY

Area and Population

Area: 13,939 sq.km (5,382 sq. miles)

Population: 209,506 at census of 12 May 1980; 254,685 (males 123,506, females 131,178) at census of 2 May 1990. By island (1980): New Providence 135,437 (including the capital, Nassau); Grand Bahama 33,102; Andros 8,397; Eleuthera 8,326.

Religion

Most of the population profess Christianity, but there are also small communities of Jews and Muslims. Traditional beliefs in witchcraft and 'bush medicine' persist in some areas; these practices are known as voodoo or obeah.

Christianity

According to the census of 1980, there were 42,091 Anglicans and Episcopalians (20.1% of the population), 39,397 Roman Catholics (18.8%) and 67,193 Baptists (32.1%). Other important denominations include the Church of God (5.7%) and the Methodists (6.1%).

The Roman Catholic Church

The Bahamas comprises the single diocese of Nassau, suffragan to the archdiocese of Kingston in Jamaica. At 31 December 1990 there were an estimated 44,251 adherents in the Bahamas. The Bishop participates in the Antilles Episcopal Conference (whose Secretariat is based in Port of Spain, Trinidad). The Turks and Caicos Islands are also under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Nassau.

Other Churches

- i) Greek Orthodox Church
- ii) Methodist Church in the Bahamas

Judaism: There were 204 Jews, according to the 1980 census in Bahamas.

MUSLIMS IN THE BAHAMAS

Islam arrived in the Bahamas as elsewhere in the Americas, with the enslaved Africans. However, its present rebirth is due to the influence of the African American reverts to Islam. Indeed, the Bilalians of the USA established the first Muslim association, "Jamaat-ul-Islam" (JI), which spread among the public the knowledge of Islam, and gathers today all Muslims of the

Bahamas. There are several Islamic Banks in the Bahamas, such as Dara-l-Mal Al-Islami, Masraf Faisal Al-Islami and Al-Taqwa Bank²⁷.

Today (1995), the number of Bahamas Muslims is estimated at around 1,500 (0.6% of total population). About 1,000 of them are converts, and the rest are mostly of East Indian origin. In 1982, JI was able to purchase a property to be used as an Islamic Center in Nassau and two acres of land, through a grant of US\$ 100,000 from Prince Muhammad Al-Faisal of Saudi Arabia. JI is headed by Faisal Abdul-Rahman. Congregational Friday and daily prayers are held regularly in its Islamic Center, usually conducted by Dr. Syed R. Kamaruddin, a dentist of East Indian origin. Classes are conducted for children and adults by Hassan Karimullah, originally from Trinidad. JI plans to build a more adequate Islamic Center and a full-time Islamic School on a plot purchased for the purpose.

The Muslim Community of the Bahamas has to struggle continuously against the loose morals prevailing in their country. In 1990, they condemned homosexuality and called upon the Government of the Bahamas to legislate laws to govern harmful behaviour of people. They feel that the Bahamas need a spiritual and moral overhaul to grow and develop as a nation. In 1991, they made a call to curtail the 24-hour bar service prevalent in the islands.

The Muslim Community of the Bahamas have also to struggle against bias. In 1991, they had to respond to the broadcast of Dr. Kingsley Fletcher attacking Islam. They believe that many teachers in the education system are trampling over the rights of Muslim children who are being harassed for their dress and subjected without the consent of their parents to Christian religious proselytism.

The Islamic Community in the Bahamas is growing fast, mostly through conversion. It is establishing its Islamic Institutions and tries to develop a society to uphold clean morals in a land where Vice became business.

GRENADA

Grenada, a mountainous, heavily-forested island, is the most southerly of the Windward Islands, in the West Indies. The country also includes some of the small islands known as the Grenadines, which lie to the north-east of Grenada. The most important of these are the low-

²⁷ M. Ali Kettani, "Muslims in the Caribbean", p.32.

lying island of Carriacou and its neighbour, Petit Martinique. The climate is semi-tropical, with an average annual temperature of 28°C (82°F) in the lowlands. The majority of the population speak English, although a French patois is sometimes spoken. Most of the population profess Christianity, and the main denominations are Roman Catholicism (to which, it is estimated, more than 60% of the population adhere) and Anglicanism (about 20% of the population). The capital is St George's.

Recent History

Grenada was initially colonized by the French but was captured by the British in 1762. British control was recognized in 1783 by the Treaty of Versailles. Grenada continued as a British colony until 1958, when it joined the Federation of the West Indies, remaining a member until the dissolution of the Federation in 1962. Full internal self government and statehood in association with the United Kingdom were achieved in March 1967. During this period, the political life of Grenada was dominated by Eric Gairy, a local trade union leader, who in 1950 founded the Grenada United Labour Party (GULP), with the support of an associated trade union. In 1951 GULP won a majority of the elected seats on the Legislative Council, but in 1957 it was defeated by the Grenada National Party (GNP), led by Herbert Blaize.

The rule of Sir Eric Gairy, who was knighted in June 1977, was regarded by the opposition as increasingly autocratic and corrupt, and on 13 March 1979 he was replaced in a bloodless coup by the leader of the left-wing New Jewel Movement (NJM), Maurice Bishop. The new People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) suspended the 1974 Constitution and announced the imminent formation of a People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) suspended the 1974 Constitution and announced the imminent formation of a People's Consultative Assembly to draft a new constitution. Meanwhile, Grenada remained a monarchy, with the British Queen as Head of State, represented in Grenada by a Governor-General. During 1980 and 1981 there was an increase in repression, against a background of mounting anti-Government violence and the PRG's fears of an invasion by U.S. forces.

By mid-1982 relations with the USA, the United Kingdom and the more conservative members of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) were becoming increasingly strained: elections had not been arranged, restrictions against the privately-owned

press had been imposed, many detainees were still awaiting trial, and Grenada was aligning more closely with Cuba and the USSR.

In March 1983 the PRG reiterated its fears that the USA was planning an invasion, and the armed forces were put on alert. The USA strenuously denied these allegations. In June Maurice Bishop sought to improve relations with the USA, and announced the appointment of a commission to draft a new constitution. This attempt at conciliation was not popular with the more left wing members of the PRG regime, who regarded Bishop's actions as an ideological betrayal. This division within the Government erupted in October into power struggle between Bishop and his deputy, Bernard Coard, the Minister of Finance and Planning. On 13 October Bishop was placed under house arrest, allegedly for his refusal to share power with Coard. Four days later, Gen. Hudson Austin, the commander of the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA), announced that Bishop had been expelled from the NJM. On 19 October thousands of Bishop's supporters, incensed by this news, stormed the house, freed Bishop from imprisonment, and demonstrated outside the PRA headquarters. Violence ensued, with PRA forces firing into the crowd. Later in the day, Bishop, three of his ministers and two trade union spokesmen were all executed by the PRA. A military coup had taken place, and the Government was replaced by a 16-man Revolutionary Military Council (RMC) led by Gen. Austin and supported by Coard and one other minister. The remaining NJM ministers were arrested and imprisoned, and a total curfew was imposed.

However, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States decided to intervene in an attempt to restore democratic order and asked for help from the USA, which readily complied. On 25 October 1983 about 1,900 US military personnel invaded the island, accompanied by 300 troops from Jamaica, Barbados and member-countries of the OECS. Fighting continued for some days, and the USA gradually increased its troop strength, with further reinforcements waiting off shore with a US naval task force. The RMC's forces were defeated, while Coard, Gen. Austin and others who had been involved in the coup were captured and imprisoned on the island, to await trial. By mid December the USA had withdrawn all its forces except 300 support troops, military, police and technicians who were to help the 430 members of Caribbean forces who remained on the island. These numbers were maintained throughout 1984. A 550-member

police force trained by the USA and the United Kingdom, was established including a paramilitary element which was to be the new defense contingent.

The trial before the Grenada High Court of 19 detainee (including Coard, his wife and Austin), accused of murder and conspiracy against Bishop and six of his associates, had opened in November 1984. However, repeated adjournments postponed the trial of 18 of the detainee until April 1986. Fourteen of the defendants were sentenced to death, three received prison sentences of between 30 to 45 years, and one was found not guilty. However, controversy, surrounded the verdicts, owing to irregularities in the selection of the judges and jury, as well as the incomplete and contradictory nature of the evidence given.

In July 1991 the Court of Appeal upheld the original verdicts that had been imposed in 1986 on the defendants in the Bishop murder trial, and further pleas for clemency were rejected.

Government

Grenada has dominion status within the Commonwealth. The British monarch is Head of State and is represented locally by a Governor-General. Executive power is held by the Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister. Parliament comprises the Senate, made up of 13 Senators appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, and the 15-member House of Representatives.

Economic Affairs

In 1991, according to estimates by the World Bank, Grenada's gross national Product (GNP), measured at average 1989-91 prices, was US\$198m., equivalent to US\$2,180 per head. During the 1980s, it was estimated, the country's GNP per head increased, in real terms, by an average of 5.6% annually, and overall GNP by an annual average of 5.9%. Between 1980 and 1991, Grenada's population increased at an average rate of 0.2% per year. Gross domestic product (GDP) increased by an annual average of 5.5% between 1985 and 1989.

Grenada's economy was severely disrupted by the political troubles and military intervention of the early 1980s. Economic policy has subsequently concentrated on the repair and development of infrastructure. However, the Government has been hindered by its sizeable internal and external debts, particularly with the cessation of US budgetary support in 1987. Grenada's economy remains dependent upon agriculture, which is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions and problems. The most promising and rapidly expanding sector of the Grenadian

economy is tourism, and revenue from tourism was expected to increase by 10% per year from 1991 onwards. In 1992 following discussions with the IMF, the Government announced the implementation of a structural adjustment programme aimed at reducing the country's external debt and increasing economic output.

Education

Education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of six and 14 years. The standard of education is high; primary education begins at five years of age and lasts for seven years. Secondary education, beginning at the age of 12, lasts for a further seven years, comprising a first cycle of five years and a second of two years. In 1990 a total of 20,207 children received public primary education in 57 schools. There were 18 public secondary schools, with 6,509 pupils registered in 1990. The Extra Mural Department of the University of the West Indies has a branch in St George's. A School of Medicine has also been established at St George's and a School of Fishing at Victoria.

Area and Population

Area: 344.5 sq km (133.0 sq miles)

Population: 93,858 at census of 7 April 1970; 89,088 (males 42,943; females 46,145) at census of 30 April 1981; 97,495 (official estimate) at mid 1988.

Principal Town: St George's (capital), population 4,788 (1981 census).

CHRISTIANITY

The Roman Catholic Church

Grenada comprises a single diocese, suffragan to the archdiocese of Castries (Saint Lucia). On 31 December 1990 there were an estimated 63,700 adherents in the diocese.

The Anglican Communion

Anglicans in Grenada are adherents of the Church in the Province of the West Indies.

Other Christian Churches

The Presbyterian, Methodist, Plymouth Brethren, Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist faiths are also represented.

SOCIO-POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE MUSLIMS

Historical accounts have indicated that Muslims and people bearing family names of Islamic origin, which obviously were inherited from their Muslim foreparents, existed in Grenada during the last few centuries. However, the present resurgence of the Islamic Movement in Grenada goes as far back as the early nineteen seventies. Initially, many Muslims from Trinidad, Barbados, Dominica, etc. were involved in the launching of Islamic Dawah in Grenada. A few local Muslims living and studying in Trinidad were part of this group named Darul Islam. Some of these brothers eventually abandoned their university studies in the interest of Dawah.

Islam then appeared to be a completely new faith to the average Grenadian though a few Muslim immigrants would have been encountered in the two major parishes, St. Georges and St. Andrews. There were many families scattered throughout the island with names such as Wadally, Ali, DeAllie, Salim, etc., and some of them resembled practices in prayer, etc. like that of the Muslims. One may therefore conclude that since the children of these Muslims may have had such close contact with no basic understanding of Islam then no significant effort was made to teach Islam. Rather, Islam was like a personal treasure with no direct link or value to their children, many of whom are Christianized today.

A tightly knit group of local brothers and sisters returned to Islam during the early seventies and emphasized on giving Dawah to the local people. By then there were about five to seven Muslim families on the island who had immigrated from Trinidad, etc. The local brothers and sisters who carried out the work of Dawah, were faced with ridicule, resentment and aspersions such as "what are you doing with this Indian religion", for in as such as the trend of education was to hide the truth of Islam, Muslims in the nearby islands did not do enough to counter this misconception. Hence, the Islamic Dawah from its inception was faced with this racial stigma which has grown to be a big problem in Grenada.

Many local brothers and sisters after returning to Islam were either thrown out of their homes or resented by their close relatives. Most brothers can tell how their mother or a close relative would deliberately cook pork and disguise or remove the skin before serving the food then afterwards confess what they did. Because of such, many domestic quarrels accrued with reference to the Muslim manner of dress, the food he ate and how he visited the toilet, etc.

Gradually, a number of people throughout Grenada were brought back to the fold of Islam. Today there are people who will give their new born babies only Muslim names and are looking towards Islam despite the worldly disadvantages. It was also a common practice of the early Muslims to live and work together.

The establishment of Salaatul Jummuah was definitely one of the most significant achievements of the Islamic work in Grenada. Congregational prayer was held at the residence of Br. Rahim in Tenpe, St. George's. It was also held at Br. Nakudah's residence in Tanteen, St. George's and at Br. Siddique's residence in Fontenoy, St. George's. An Islamic Centre was also set up by the Islamic Missionary Guild at Fontenoy for teaching and propagating Islam and many brothers lived there. The enthusiasm and zeal for Islam as a complete way of life then was unprecedented in the history of Islam in Grenada. Many brothers and sisters rejected their Christian names and adopted names indicative of Islam. Knowledge of Islam was scarce but the mental attitude of the Muslims was one of unity and overzealousness for Islam to shape and fashion their lives.

During the latter part of the nineteen seventies three groups emerged:-

- (a) The Islamic Party
- (b) The Tablighi Jamaat
- (c) The Darul-Islam

These three groups were a direct result of the ethnic, social, economic and academic background of the early Muslims. As the Islamic Movement settled in an environment within which Islamic knowledge and culture were absent, the problems as mentioned above dictated the course of things.

In 1977 there were approximately 10-15 Muslim families in Grenada along with a number of single brothers who were greatly absorbed in the socio-political tide which swept Grenada. The black power movement was slowly dying out giving rise to the Rastafarian Movement. There were also many serious political issues affecting the lives of people in Grenada with specific reference to the rise of the New Jewel Movement vis-a-vis the Gairy regime. Therefore, it is important to note that the Islamic Work in Grenada did not emanate from a vacuum. Rather, it is greatly attached to the yearning for a new life among young people in Grenada. With the coming into being of these three groups in Grenada the Muslims of Indo-Pakistani background,

mainly immigrants, functioned at their homes but held congregational prayer upstairs a private business establishment namely - Bobbys Tyre Mart - along with the Darul-Islam brothers. The Islamic Party functioned and kept congregational prayer at a centre in Beaulieu, St. George's and in St. Andrews. The Darul-Islam group of local brothers operated a shoe shop downstairs the town hall at the Market Square.

These groups as stated before were a direct result of the many cultural, social and overwhelming economic problems which affected the Islamic work. But the Marxist revolution of March 1979 led by Maurice Bishop was undoubtedly the greatest test of the Islamic work in Grenada. Most brothers of the Islamic Party were greatly affected by the Marxist movement. Some thought it appropriate to co-operate with such system, so they did. But as these leaders established their ideology there by intimidating everyone who did not wholeheartedly accept such, they were able to put Muslims backs against the wall. Consequently, three of the Muslim brothers in St. Patrick. Yusuf, Ayyub and Habib were shot and killed on sight without any recourse to trial in a court of law. The leader of the Islamic Party, Bilaal Romain, Yaro, Wadud, Hakim and Sister Huda were imprisoned until the American Intervention of 1983.

The circumstances during the Marxist revolution dictated unity of Muslims if they had any hope of survival. The community once again came together for congregational prayer upstairs Bobbys Tyre Mart and on 18th May 1982 the first attempt was made to form the Islamic Foundation. The first executive of the Islamic Foundation comprised of Imam, Br. Ibrahim Khalid of Pakistan, Co-ordinating Presidents Omar Al-Sheriff and Askia Muhammad, Co-ordinating Secretaries, Brs. Azam Rahaman of Trinidad and Michael Chase of Grenada and two other members: Rafeeque Nakudah of India and Abu Daud of Grenada.

The Islamic Foundation immediately identified the building of a masjid as its first priority and proceeded to launch a masjid fund in September of 1982. Since then Yusuf Islam of England and others have contributed to this fund. To date an amount of approximately 15,000.00 EC dollars have been raised.

The Islamic Foundation under the leadership of these brothers organized the Muslim and Syrian Arab communities in a protest march against the Israeli bombings of the Sabra and Shatilla Palestinian camps in Lebanon during September 1982. Assistance was sought from the Libyan Embassy which was functioning those days in Grenada. They were also contacted to help

in the release of the Muslim brothers from political detention but no significant result was achieved. However, they were prepared to provide adequate funding for building Grenada's first masjid but the Embassy in Grenada was soon closed.

As the Muslim brothers were released from political detention through co-ordinated efforts of the Muslims they joined the existing structure of the Islamic Foundation which was plagued with many internal problems. Ibrahim Khalid left for Canada before the intervention and serious internal strife threatened to tear the young organization apart.

A general meeting of the community was convened in September 1985 to elect a new executive to manage the Islamic Foundation. Muhammad Siddique was elected Imam along with four to five more members to serve the community. This executive inherited many serious problems which became more and more complicated over the years and they remained unsolved even today. These problems once again brought separation in 1987 when a faction of the Indo-Pakistani brothers broke away from the main group to build their own masjid. The magnitude of these problems influenced the local brothers to convene a workshop in August of 1988. This workshop was designed to bring together as much brothers and sisters as possible of Grenadian background to analyse and evaluate the past fourteen years of Islam in Grenada. This workshop generated another general meeting to elect a new Imam. Bilaal Assim Romain succeeded Brother Muhammad Siddique as Imam in August of 1988. A nineteen point memorandum as guidelines for serious consideration was drawn up by this workshop. Daud Abdul Haqq of Barbados along with others contributed to this workshop.

Later, another attempt was made to address the deteriorating state of affairs affecting the Muslim Community of Grenada. A general meeting was convened and an Interim Executive was elected to examine the problems and eventually put the community on a positive note. Presently, the Interim comprises Asif Cheeda, Co-ordinating Secretary, Bilaal Romain, Imam, and Azam Rahaman, Kayam Jaleel, Khalid Abdul Lateef and Haroon Muhammad. A constitution is now being drafted and other practical steps initiated to bring credence and respectability to the Islamic Foundation.

During the past few years some of the local brothers and sisters have been setting up youth camps during holiday periods and a weekend school is now run by the Imam. They also had assistance from I.I.F.S.O. which had been arranging a scholarship for one of the local

brothers. The community has also been represented in many regional conferences by various brothers over the years. They also have a few brothers who have travelled in pursuit of Islamic knowledge, etc. Two of these brothers are now qualified but are still abroad. One of these brothers who was qualified as a maulana in Pakistan is now in the U.S.A. and the other in Sudan holds Ph.D. in history.

The present Interim is determined to generate a new awakening of the Islamic Movement in Grenada, and is seeking to do the following:-

1. Set up a co-ordinating council involving all Muslims.
2. Decide on a constitution for registration.
3. Carry out a census with a view to registering all members of the community.
4. Mobilize resources locally, regionally and abroad for establishing a permanent masjid in Grenada.
5. Developing the weakened school and holiday camps for children.
6. Developing a weekly family circle.
7. Establishing an Islamic library.
8. Establishing linkages with organisation/countries in the region and abroad for an on going interaction and sharing of experience and knowledge.
9. Requesting the organisation/countries to depute an Imam or expert in the religion to provide more insight of Islam to local brothers.
10. To raise funds for a separate Muslim burial ground in Grenada.
11. To request sponsorship for one or two local brothers/sisters on an annual basis for studying in an Islamic university or school.

When I visited the Grenadian Muslim Community in February, 1995, I had an opportunity to interview Imam Hasan Gonzalez, Br. Azam Rahman, Br. Asif Cheeda, Br. Omar al Shariff and Br. Siddique. All of them were worried about deteriorating state of the Muslim's unity in Grenada. There seemed a cleavage in the leadership of the Muslims and almost every person was found complaining against the other. Efforts were made to help resolve their disputes but to no avail. Some brothers in the executive of the IFG declared other members of the executive as "dishonest" and "violators of IFG's Constitution". The common Muslims were in a state of confusion. They could not differentiate as who was right and who was wrong.

CONCLUSION

Muslims in the Caribbean, with respect to their socio-economic and political position, are in their evolutionary development. They have been a significant part of the political development in Trinidad and Guyana through negligible in other Caribbean countries. Their contributions in the field of social services has been appreciated by the private and public sectors. The region is currently facing economic crisis. Thousands of talented individuals have fled their homes and are seeking a better life in the northern countries. The Muslim community has also suffered a drain in its potential leadership and in some areas tremendous responsibility has been placed in the hands of a few dedicated individuals. Caribbean people are looking for a means of social elevation, moral upliftment and political freedom. A number of bright sports are emerging in the Muslim Caribbean which if properly developed could lead to a strong presence for Islam. Education is the area in which Muslims of Trinidad Guyana and Barbados have made achievements which will be explored in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Islam is a faith and a way of life, a social order and a social movement. All those who are committed to this faith are expected to live in accordance to its principles and strive to make a better world by enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.¹ Education is the first step in the process of creating a better understanding of the world and the role of the Muslims to improve cognition of the creator, Allah (SWT). With the waves of immigrants to the New World either through indentureship or otherwise, pockets of Muslims settled throughout the Caribbean and the Americas. Caught between the materialist and largely Christian West, Muslim parents were busy earning a livelihood and often overlooked the total and complete education of their children. Moreso, they are so influenced by Western Civilization that they ignore spiritual and religious aspect of their child's development. The consequences of which are Muslim children split between two conflicting cultures - one reached at home from a ritualistic perspective and the other at school which is diametrically opposite to that seen at home.² Splayed in a web of multi-cultural and multi-religious education, unbridled liberty and permissiveness in society and ignorance of the Islamic way, Muslim children are driven away from their noble principles and values.

Trinidad & Tobago is the only country in the Caribbean where Muslims have been consciously endeavouring to establish their educational institutions to fight alien ideologies and cultures. Schools and colleges have been set up by various Muslim bodies for both males and females some of which are government assisted while others are operating privately.

There are presently five separate Muslim school systems existing in Trinidad. These are the Tackvegatul Islam Association (TIA), Anjuman Summatul Jamaat Association (ASJA),

¹ Al-Qur'an 3:110.

² Khadijah V.J. Kamalodeen, The Educational Challenges of Muslims in the 21st Century, an unpublished paper presented in the seminar: "Educational Needs of Muslims in T&T in the 21st Century", on Aug. 27, 1995, organized by the UWI Islamic Society Alumni, Trinidad, p.4.

Trinidad Muslim League (TML), Jamaat al Muslimeen's Al Shaheed Abdul Kareem School and Darul Uloom located at various parts of Trinidad. Muslim communities in other parts of the Caribbean could not develop their educational institutions either due to their lack of consciousness or lack of resources. In Guyana, Guyana Islamic Institute is serving the local Muslim community and few other communities of the surrounding Caribbean islands but all on a limited level. This Institute depends squarely on few individuals living in the U.S. and Canada who sponsor its activities. Gujrati Muslims in Barbados depend largely on the religious scholars educated in India who can teach in Urdu or Gujarati. Afro-Barbadian Muslims can hardly benefit from these scholars. Efforts are afoot to arrange Islamic education for the new Muslims in Barbados³.

In this chapter, case of Muslim's educational institutions in Trinidad will be discussed at a considerable length in order to study the historical development of Muslim schools, description and analysis of the existing Muslim educational institutions and their viability in a Western pluralistic society.

Historical Development of Muslim Schools in Trinidad

The Society in Trinidad is multi-cultural and multi-ethnic in origin. It consists of people of various nations and religions. One of the smaller but considerable constituent of this society is the Muslims who have indelibly made an impact on the culture, education and behavioural patterns of people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Muslims who came to Trinidad as indentured labourers were largely illiterate and their children remained so inspite of existence of Christian and secular schools. The indentures were not allowed entry in the Christian schools while to secular schools the indentures did not allow their children for fear of ridicule and ill treatment. The Canadian Presbyterian Mission ventured into education and schooling as a means of christianizing the indenturers. Many Christian missionary schools had been established initially with the specific intention of converting the East Indian population of Trinidad to the Christian faith.⁴ The Merle Davis Report of 1942 also

³ My interview with Dr. Nagdee on Feb.9, 1995.

⁴ Clayton G. Mackenzie, "Muslim Primary Schools in Trinidad and Tobago", The Islamic Quarterly, Volume XXXIII (Number 1), First quarter 1989, p.7.

urged the establishment of Presbyterian primary schools for the main purpose of "Christianizing the rising generation of East Indians" in Trinidad.⁵

This missionary objective of Christianizing East Indian by the first Christian schools was consistently confirmed by the Christian denominational board secretaries to whom Clayton G. Mackenzie met during his stay in Trinidad and Tobago in 1987.⁶ The missionary activities had marginal effects as the Indians resisted conversion and by 1921 only 11.8% of the Indian population had accepted Christianity.⁷

Many of these who left their original faith did so more out of economic necessity since job opportunities for non-Christians were very scarce. A Canadian Missionary Minister (1957) is reported to have said, "before 1937 an Indian man became a Christian because it paid him to do so. Now he thinks he can get along without it."⁸

When the contracts of the Muslim indentures were expired they needed the need to organize themselves into communities in order to ensure the preservation of their faith and culture. As a result they selected Imams from amongst the comparatively learned ones and formed district organizations (Jamaat) and erected mosques with whatever resources were available with them. The Imams were made responsible to provide leadership in all aspects pertaining religious ceremonies and conduct of "maktabs". These maktabs or madrassas were a kind of schools attached to the mosques. These maktabs were the forerunners of the secular schools that exist today. These were primarily for the Muslim children and conducted on afternoons and evenings. The syllabus included Tajweed al Quran, reading and writing Urdu

⁵ Kamaluddin Muhammad quoted in Tackveeyatul Islamic Association of Trinidad and Tobago Silver Anniversary Souvenir Brochure, ed. Sham S. Muhammad (Port of Spain: Syncreators Ltd. 1974), P. 22.

⁶ Mackenzie, Op. Cit; p. 14.

⁷ Judy K. Kamalodeen, "Muslim schools in Trinidad and Tobago - an Analysis of the Implementation of the Islamic System in a Western Pluralistic Society, (University of West Indies: 1990), p.2.

⁸ Hamid Idris, "A History of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad 1868 - 1968", (San Fernando, Trinidad), quoted by Judy K. Kamalodeen (op.cit.)

and learning about the fundamentals of Islam. Their financial needs were fulfilled through voluntary donations, either cash or kind.

Development of Muslim Schools

For many years before 1949, various Hindu and Muslim bodies had been petitioning to the administration of Trinidad colony for the grant of education to non-Christian denominations. At that time, Christian denominational schools were given considerable grant by the government.⁹ All these efforts of the Muslims could not produce any worthwhile result until the arrival of Maulana Nazir Ahmad Simab in Trinidad from Lahore in 1935, that petitions became more persistent and organized. Simab was a bachelor of Arts, Munshi Fazil with honours in Persian and Urdu. Before coming to Trinidad he had attained twenty two years experience as a Quranic teacher and was affiliated with the Anjuman-e-Khuddam-ud-Din of Lahore which was founded by Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori. He came to Trinidad under the auspices of the Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association (ASJA)¹⁰.

Simab demanded equal rights to non-Christians in all matters relating to education. He established a primary Islamic school at Bissessar Street, San Juan. It was run for two years in accordance with Government requirement through private contributions and immense sacrifice on his part.¹¹ After Simab's death, Moulvi Ameer Ali, who was a member on the Government Board of Education, struggled for these grants and was followed later by M.A.R. Ghany after his death. On Monday, March 3rd, 1949 the first state aided, non-Christian denominational elementary school was established and opened.¹²

The struggle and success of the TIA in obtaining legislation on behalf of all non-Christian bodies for education grants resulted in the rapid establishment of many more non-Christian elementary schools, which included those of the ASJA and the TML. ASJA built three schools in 1953 and three more in 1955. In 1958, ASJA Education Board was formed. In 1960 ASJA

⁹ Mackenzie, op.cit. p.7

¹⁰ The Caribbean Muslim Standard, Trinidad, Issue 06-1995-36, p. 10.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Judy K. Kamalodeen, op.cit. p.3

Boys College and later ASJA Girls College in 1962 were built. TML opened schools in 1953, 1955, and 1957 in San Fernando, Princes Town and St. Joseph respectively.

It is to be noted that during the period 1950-1958 most non-Christian primary schools were established. There was a significant decline immediately after this period. After the 1970s Black power Movement, some new changes amongst Muslims came to the fore. Many people of African descent reverted to Islam and Islam began to slowly divest itself of its 'Indian' image. The Islamic activities in part gave rise to the Jamaat al Muslimeen in Mucurapo which built a primary school in 1980 and in 1982 opened its secondary school named after Ash-Shaheed Abdul Kareem. Other private schools were also established during the 1980's by the Darul Uloom in Cunupia and San Juan and by the Islamic Missionaries Guild in Kelly Village. The Darul Uloom schools are of secondary level and the IMG school was from kindergarten to secondary levels. One of the main reasons for growth of Muslim schools in the 1980's is the increase in education and awareness of Islam by both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Objectives of establishing Muslim Schools

The Trinidadian Muslims had various objectives to establish schools in Trinidad. These are religious, economic and humanitarian.

1. The propagation, sustenance and perpetuation of Islam can be achieved effectively through the education of young Muslims. Many parents were rarely qualified for this job and schools provided a viable alternative. Further the Qur'an and Hadith advise that it is incumbent on all Muslims to acquire knowledge and organized and structured institutions and programmes have been characteristic of Islam since its very beginning.
2. Many Muslims were converted to Christianity for more lucrative jobs e.g. teaching and opportunities and education in Christian schools.
3. It was recognized by many Muslims that the education offered by the Christian denominational schools to the Indentures were "designed to make British subjects of all in a land that was conquered... and to promote the welfare of the British Empire" and may have in fact submerged them in a "culture of silence" instead of liberating them. Muslims opened schools to prevent conversion to Christianity

and to stem the tide of western cultural influence as they became aware of the acculturation potential of education.

4. Other Muslims saw the establishment of Muslim schools as a great humanitarian effort - eradicating illiteracy and acquisition of knowledge.

MUSLIM SCHOOLS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

There are five separate Muslim school systems existing in Trinidad and Tobago today. These are the schools of the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association (TIA), Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association (ASJA), Trinidad Muslim League (TML), which are Government assisted and the Jamaat al Muslimeen (Ash-Sheed Abdul Kareem), Darul Uloom and Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG) which are newer and private institutions.

Tackveeyatul Islamic Association (TIA)

These schools were the first non-Christian denominational schools set up initially by Maulana Nazir Ahmad Simab. There are five primary schools set up through 1947-1955. They are El Socorro TIA, Lengua TIA, Warrenville TIA, Arranguez TIA and Five Rivers TIA. The TIA has also the Education Board. These schools have over the years made great strides in both academic and extra-curricular areas. Many of their pupils and teachers have taken active part in various professions such as politics, medicines, engineering etc.

In these schools, religious content is imparted and is greatly assisted by the Maktabas at the various Mosques which are usually located in close proximity to the schools. The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) is active and teachers though not totally qualified are yet enthusiastic. The teaching of Arabic is also present with daily prayers being recited in both Arabic and English. Special hour is given to attend the Mosque on Fridays for Salat al Jumu'ah. (Friday congregational prayer). Occasions such as Eid-ul-Fitr and Meelad-un-Nabi (birthday celebration of the Prophet (ASW) are celebrated in an elaborate manner.

It is interesting to note that while all teachers are Muslims, many non-Muslims also attend the schools e.g. in Five Rivers TIA there are 25% Muslims, 60% Hindus and the rest Christians.¹⁵ Religious festivals are organized recognizing the various religions of the pupils.

¹⁵ Judy K. Kamalodeen, "Muslim Schools in Trinidad", p.15.

Junior Red Cross, Co-operatives and school outings have been organized to help an all embracing the all-round development of students among the multi-racial and multi-religious school population. The main aim of the school is the propagation of Islam through a multi religious and multi-cultural education system.

Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association (ASJA)

ASJA presently runs seven primary schools and two secondary schools in different areas of Trinidad. These are located at San Fernando, Princes Town, Rio Claro, Barrackpore, Point Fortin, Carapichaima, and Charleville. The Secondary schools are single sex and both are located in San Fernando. These are the first Muslim Secondary schools established in 1960 and 1962 respectively. The primary schools operates on co-educational basis.

The philosophy of these schools are mainly to educate Muslim youths along Sunni school of thought and to assist in the secular education of the youth and to provide religious education to all the students regardless of religion.

The Board of Education was set up in 1958 which administrates and provides financial support for maintenance of the schools. All appointments of teachers are made by the Teaching Service Commission upon the recommendations by the Principal and the ASJA Education Board after the prospective teacher has passed an interview. The majority of teachers are Muslims in these schools. However there are quite a few non-Muslim teachers in some of the schools e.g. the ratio in ASJA Boys College is 15:7 in the favour of Muslims.

The curriculum offered in the primary schools is considered for all Government assisted denominational schools (i.e. all the Government stipulated subjects with a half hour allowance for religious instruction everyday). Morning assemblies usually centre around religious teachings. The class teachers conduct both the religious instruction classes and morning assemblies with all students regardless of the student's religion. Parents are permitted however to withdraw their children from the class if they desire so. Religious festivals such as Eid-ul-Fitr and the Prophet's birth day are also celebrated at the school level to include all students and teachers. At these celebrations/functions various Imams and Islamic scholars from the Muslim community are invited to address the audience.

The secondary schools have a heavy academic curriculum. These include mathematics, English, history, business, science, Spanish and computer literacy. The school offers Arabic and

Islamic Theology to Muslims only, the Moral Education classes to non-Muslims. The Arabic and Islamic Theology classes are offered twice a week while the Moral Education classes are offered four times per week. All of these subjects are offered only up to the third form.

ASJA has done fairly well in the academic (secular) education as the main emphasis is placed on this area. In the case of the secondary schools, many pupils move on to do Advanced Levels at other schools when it was not offered at their own school (i.e. prior to September 1989). Recently a co-educational "A" level class was introduced as a joint programme of the Boys and Girls Colleges. A language lab and computer services have recently been set up to expand the academic curriculum

The Arabic and Islamic Theology classes are usually taught by the regular academic staff teachers but recently Moulana Sulemani has been recruited to teach these subjects and to lead the daily Salat al Dhur (mid-day prayer) and Salat al Jumu'ah while the academic staff conducts Moral Education classes. Teachers are encouraged to take part in this area of activities but experience has shown that very few actually do so.

In many of the schools, there is a very high non-Muslim population. For example in the case of ASJA Boy's College only about 20% of the school's student population is Muslim. The percentage is higher in the primary schools. The Charlieville Primary school possessing the largest Muslim population (72%).¹⁴

Trinidad Muslim League (TML)

The TML schools are located mainly in St. Joseph, San Fernando and Princes Town. At St. Joseph a kindergarten, a primary and a secondary school are located close to the Mosque. Only the primary school is Government assisted and the secondary school was opened in 1985.

The TML instituted a Board of Education in charge of these schools. Teachers and principal are paid by this Board. School fees are the sole financial support of the school and possibly a few fund raising ventures within the school. The Board has a heavy influence on the administration of the school and areas of emphasis in the curriculum.

Initially remedial classes for post Common Entrance pupils were organized alongside traditional subjects. In these classes the teaching of Arabic and Islamic theology were

¹⁴ Ibid., p.17.

emphasized. Religious education was taught not just as a subject but as a code for the whole day. Salah was performed in the Mosque between the three schools on a daily basis during the 2nd and 3rd period. Salat al Dhuhur and Salat al Jumu'ah was organized by the students. It is to be noted that this is the first secondary school mentioned which has ordained full Islamic dress for its students.

Due to financial constraints many of the teachers are not qualified and receive small payments. Also due to varying and often conflicting ideologies teachers often leave the school and the continuity of many of the programmes suffer.

The student population in the secondary school is 40 of which 31 are Muslims.

Religious instructions are conducted once a week and include reading and writing Arabic. This is restricted to form 1 and 2.

Several private Muslim schools were set up in the 1980's and exist in the form of AshShaheed Abdul Kareem Primary and Secondary schools, IMG Islamic school and Darul Uloom Institute of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ash-Shaheed Abdul Kareem Schools

The Ash Shaheed Abdul Kareem schools are privately run by the Jamaat al Muslimeen. They were established in 1980 and 1982 respectively. These schools grew out of the community at Mucurapo as many converts to Islam needed a school for their children. Many of them are poor and yet desired a Muslim school. The primary school has about 200 children with 8 teachers. Full Islamic wear is the uniform for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike for which there is a ratio of 3:1. A nursery school is attached to the school and classes ascend up to the Common Entrance level.

The aim of this school is to provide a groomed personality with adequate knowledge about Islam. A variety of activities including Qur'anic recitation contests, concerts, outings etc. are all organized. The children of both schools receive free meals and regular congregational daily prayer are conducted in the Mosque which is also located in close vicinity of the schools.

The secondary school houses about 45 pupils with 37 being Muslims. Classes span from remedial pre-secondary class to the fifth form where CXC and London GCE examinations are conducted. Arabic, Qur'an, Tafsir, Hadith, Islamic Studies are covered in addition to English, Mathematics, Spanish, Geography and Integrated Science. These studies are compulsory up to

form 3 and optional thereafter up to form 5. Internal assessment are done for the Islamic courses. The Board of education largely run the school as many pupils are too poor to pay even the minimal school fee. However they are not refused the right to an education.

Political sanctions affect the running of these schools to a large extent. Classes were often disturbed when 'raids' took place on the Jamaat al Muslimeen by the Police and Army personnel. However many Muslims and non-Muslims alike still prefer to send their children to this school as the academic success at the school has been creditable.

Financial constraints and hence poor facilities, insufficient academic staff, all play a role towards the progress of these schools. Government and parental financial support is small and most of the works are performed as charitable efforts in the path of Islam.

Darul Uloom Institute of Trinidad and Tobago

This is comprises of two schools - a boys and girls college respectively, both at the secondary level. Established in September 1986 under the supervision of the late Mufti Shabil Ali, it accepts Muslim students who have completed primary schooling. It merges both secular and religious knowledge and presently administers a 7 year course, where the student writes the CXC Examinations in the secular subjects at the end of the fifth year and continues for two more years pursuing only the religious programme. It aims to produce useful citizens and natural leaders and mostly Muslim educated along Islamic lines. The curriculum was designed to suit the needs of the pupils and offers English, Mathematics, History, Geography and Integrated Science as well as Arabic Language, Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic History, Rhetoric, Hadith Studies, and Exegesis of Qur'an.¹⁵ The method of instruction is emphasized along Islamic lines. The teachers are versed in both religious and secular areas and they teach subjects in both areas. Each school presently accommodates 43 pupils with an average staff of five including of the Principal. Students are required to pay a school fee, but this accounts for almost 25% of actual expenses. Donations contribute the additional 75% necessary for the upkeep of the school.

What is unique about this institution is the Boarding facility provided for all male pupils. All meals are prepared in house. Pupils are allowed to visit their homes on weekends, for illness

¹⁵ A Brochure on the Educational Programmes of Darul Uloom Trinidad & Tobago (Trinidad: 9th July, 1994).

of either themselves or close relatives and on other special occasions. This was considered as a necessary part of the Islamic educational environment for the young adolescents. Parents are encouraged to visit the schools for discussions relating to the progress of the children. The academic year for this institution runs from early September to late July with holidays at Xmas, Easter and the month of Ramadan. In addition holidays are also observed at the two Eid celebrations (3 days each).

All teachers and the principal take part in all the activities of the Institute, (curricular and extra-curricular). Special emphasis is paid to the moulding of the character and the all-round development of the pupils. The lodging facilities as well as the entire school's maintenance is done by the pupils through the assignment of special duties and responsibilities by the Principal. Efforts are also made to engage the pupils in discussions on theological and cultural differences that exist in the society. The uniform is Islamic and all formalized prayers (Salah) are performed on the school premises.

The school is administrated by a board of education. The aims of the institution has been identified as the development and training of the students along the Islamic way of life with special emphasis on their roles and responsibilities as Da'ees.¹⁶ The success of the school has been attributed to structured and organized administration and planning. Certificates are awarded at the end of the third and fifth years of studies. The school intends to extend its classes to the advanced level in both areas. It is also envisaged that a primary school will be established in the near future and will serve as a feeder institution for the secondary schools.

The Islamic Missionaries Guild's Islamic School

The Education Committee of the IMG established an Islamic school at the Islamic Centre Kelly Village, Caroni, in September 1985. The school had accommodated 150 pupils from the kindergarten level straight up to the secondary level.

Qualified Muslim teachers were employed as well as the services of three Islamic scholars (Shaykhs) including the principal. The Shaykhs taught Arabic language as well as

¹⁶ My interview with Mufti Shabil Ali on February 2, 1995 at Darul Uloom, Trinidad.

Qur'anic and Islamic studies. These occupied 9-12 sessions per week at both the primary and secondary levels.

In addition, students were doing nine secular subjects which included Science, Mathematics, History and Arabic to be examined at the London GCE O' Level examinations. Efforts were also made to establish affiliation with the Al Azhar University (Cairo, Egypt) and the Islamic University of Saudi Arabia so as to enable students attending these schools to be examined externally by these Universities under local supervision.

Students were required to pay a school fee which is highly subsidized by the IMG. About 15% of the population was non-Muslim and full Islamic dress was the uniform.

The goals of the school were defined as the development of an all-round student with a firm understanding and commitment to Islam with emphasis on character building and leadership training. IMG school which was operating in the Da'wah College has been closed for mismanagement by its managers.¹⁷

ANALYSIS

Muslims have during a relatively short period of time established a number of schools in Trinidad. They have secured a niche in the country's education system and many of the schools have made substantial contributions to the society both in terms of producing educated people who later become valuable citizens by virtue of their involvement in various professions and vocations and conscious Muslims.

Initially many of the schools were established with the noble objective of implementing an Islamic model system. However, the implementation of that system is not reflected in the school's products. This is mainly due to the environment within which these schools operate (i.e. a secular-Christian system) and the qualifications of the Muslim educators themselves.

The Government assisted schools demonstrate a marked difference from the private institutions with the exception of the TML secondary. The former and the TML secondary schools placed more emphasis on the secular areas while the latter have found significant

¹⁷ My interview with Hisham Badran on July 18, 1991 at Islamic Centre, Kelly Village, Caroni, Trinidad.

problems in merging both the religious and secular areas resulting in a marked inclination towards the religious areas.

The emphasis placed on the secular area by the Government assisted schools are due to a variety of factors of which the following may be considered as instrumental:

1. Stipulation of the Curricula by the Government
2. Admission of students through a common National examination
3. Psychological pressures to meet the success of the already established denominational schools which were run along secular lines.
4. Lack of a comprehensive concept of a structured system of education in accordance with Islamic ideology and philosophy.
5. Differing views by administration on the implementation of the stipulated aims of education of the schools.
6. Lack of adequate Muslim teachers who are willing to adhere to the basic concepts of Islam and the associated unwillingness to transmit these 'adab to their wards
7. Ineffective leadership at these schools as the Principals (and teachers too) were product of a secular system and possessed minimal training in the religious areas.
8. Inclination of the society as a whole to secular education (which was of course due to their experience with the more established schools) and the notion that religious education was indoctrination.
9. Influence of Western ideology on education which encourages and views religion as belonging to the Church.

Many of the above points are debatable in so far as the extent of the influences of the various factors and the accommodation required as a result of state assistance to these schools. With respect to the stipulated curricula by the state, the method of instruction would serve an important part in the preservation and reinforcement of the value systems of the Islamic way of life. For example, those areas of the syllabus which conflict with ideology of Islam could be treated in such a manner to facilitate discussion and not indoctrination. This would serve to truly educate the students with not only knowledge but also understanding of the Islamic position. Further, the knowledge of the conflicting thoughts will also be achieved for the purposes of examinations etc., without necessarily believing/accepting that it is the Truth.

It is also important to note that there is a lack of teacher/staff training programmes (secular and religious) whereby these problems and associated approaches to Islamization of knowledge can be addressed. The absence of these and the persistent refusal to structure a teachers ongoing upliftment programme have resulted in a general inertia amongst staff/teachers in their circumventing some of the associated problems of state assistance and foreign cultural influences.

The lack of qualified teachers who are also trained in religious areas has resulted in some schools resorting to the use of Islamic scholars who are products of systems which were religiously biased. This only serves to propagate the already existing dichotomy between the secularism and religion.

While religious instruction and Arabic are offered at most of these schools, the treatment of these subjects are also secular in approach and no attempt is made to establish the relation of these subjects with the other subjects as well as the life of the students themselves. Thus the study of the religious area has been marginal if not zero impact on the student.

The religious subjects are given scant treatment as in some schools they are only offered up to the third form and assessment in these subjects is minimal. This further propagates the emphasis on secular subjects and students are left to perceive that the religious subjects are for the large part insignificant and unimportant.

The small proportion of Muslims in many of these schools also contribute to preventing the establishment of an Islamic ambience and environment within the school. This stems directly from the fact that many Muslim parents opt to (or would prefer to) send their children to other denominational (prestige) schools in a society in which Muslims are a small minority. This then results in Muslims being a minority in a Muslim school.

The private institutions appear to have much more control over the influence of Islam in the school. They offer a heavier religious content and generally have a majority of Muslim students. They also try to inculcate an Islamic approach to various secular subjects and develop the all-round personality of the student. However, these schools are also beset with many a problems.

Financial resources are the major factors to the survival of these institutions. The school fees collected (if obtained) generally contribute minimally to the actual overhead expenses. Donations, fund raising activities and subsidies are usually a norm.

Stemming from the poor financial position of all of these schools are many other related problems of which the following also threaten the survival of the schools:

1. inadequate facilities, teaching resources and basic amenities
2. unattractive staff remuneration packages
3. unavailability of support mechanisms

As a result of the above, invariably, teachers at these schools offer their services on a voluntary basis rather than on economic one as the salaries are significantly less than their Government employed counterparts. Inevitably therefore many of the teachers will find it necessary to maintain other jobs for their own economic survival. Alternatively, some of the better trained and the best suited teachers will not be attracted to these jobs. In either case, the production level of the teacher either in the case of not yielding their full potential or in the case of their ability, seriously inhibit the process of education.

There is a lack of teachers who could judiciously blend both areas into a well refined model Muslim teacher. This results in the use of religious trained scholars for the religious subjects and secular trained teachers for the secular subjects. Only the Darul Uloom has been able to partially alleviate this problem.

The psychological impact on the students who attend these schools need an analysis. Normally academic abilities of many of these students are lower than the normal child since many of the students who attend these schools may have either failed to secure a place in a secondary school or failed to secure a place of their own preference, and therefore opted to attend these schools. Others have genuine interest in obtaining an Islamic education, but these are few. Yet others attend these schools due to loyalty to the organizations which run these institutions.

It is to be noted that out of the private secondary schools, only the Darul Uloom and the two government assisted Secondary (ASJA) are single sex schools. The other secondary schools have not yet been able to introduce this requirement of the Islamic system due to financial and pupil population size constraints.

Lack of suitable text books and resource materials have created myriad of problems that continue to upset these schools. There is a need for integrated knowledge and text books written with an Islamic perspective for Muslim students that would not affect their performance in the locally recognized external examinations.

In majority of these schools, there is a lack of curriculum planning and development. This initiate many problems as earlier indicated.

In many of these schools, there is only an internal system whereby the religious subjects are evaluated. The secular subjects are examined by a secular external examination system. There is a need for an integrated examination system in which the Islamic perspectives of the secular subjects can be evaluated.

These schools to some extent achieve some of the aims of Islamic education. However, no system established has offered the well balanced curriculum of Islamic education for the youth while retaining the Islamic ambience of the school. It is noted that these schools are still new and their success or failure cannot be prejudged. However, Muslims should not be satisfied with just establishing schools but need to address the larger problem of Islamic education of the youth - helping them to grow to be 'good' men and women who would spiritually fulfilled, morally upright, economically productive, socially responsible, individually strong, and be active in shaping the direction and destiny of their society.

GUYANA ISLAMIC INSTITUTE (GII)

The Guyana Islamic Institute was established in 1986 by the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT). Previously the GIT had organized two one year Intensive Islamic Training Programme which were attended by the Muslim youth of Guyana and the Caribbean. The lack of funds and the bad state of economy prevented continuity of such courses in Guyana. However, courses of shorter duration continued but need was still felt for a more extended educational programme. Some leading members of the GIT felt that an Islamic Institute for the long term educational development of the Muslim community should be established in Guyana.¹⁸

¹⁸ Introductory brochure on GIT published in 1992, pp.2-3.

Irshad Azami, a Deoband graduate and Dar ul Ifta (Saudi Arabia) sponsored worker assisted in chalking out courses and syllabus for a different stages of Islamic studies. The plan of the GIT was to create an educational environment for Muslims between the ages of 15 and 25 who are willing to dedicate four years of their lives to the study of Islam. It has now been reduced to two years.¹⁹ The institute is located at the Meten Meu Zorg Mosque in the West Coast Demerara. The writer has visited the institute in December 1991 during a training camp held in Guyana. The camp was conducted at the premises of this institute. The principal and the members of the Board of Governors belong to GIT. The building is not impressive and the boarding arrangements also needed improvements in many aspects. However, enthusiasm and patience of administration in running the institute despite discouraging financial situation praiseworthy. A new building of the institute was then under construction and by July 1996, it was expected that the institute's classes will start in new building. The land for the building has been donated by Hifazatul Islam Organization of Guyana. New Building consists of 12 dormitories ten bathrooms, principals room, Institute office and four class rooms besides a spacious hall for prayer.

In December 1994 a water channel had stagnated in the vicinity of the site of the new institute which had polluted the whole atmosphere with rancour. The manager of the construction work were optimistic about cleaning of stagnated water by the government. The writer found that number of academic staff required to run the institute was insufficient. A prominent teacher and ex principal of the institute had joined a rival organization. There were three permanent teachers. Shaikh Rauf Zaman, Shaikh Dawood Baksh and Shaikh Abdur Rehman. All of these teachers are called shaikhs because they are graduates of institutions of the Middle East. Whosoever returns from an Islamic Institution abroad is later identified as "Shaikh" and is highly respected by the Muslim community. In 1992 there were 29 registered students. Five students had graduated in 1990. They were the first to complete the full four years.²⁰ The utilization of the graduates will mainly by the mosques where they act as Imaams. The graduates are considered as vigorous votaries of the GIT. The present Murshid of the GIT

¹⁹ My interview with Rauf Zaman, ex-Principal GIT, on Dec. 20, 1994.

²⁰ Shaikh Rauf Zaman, op.cit.

Habib ur Rehman once revealed the future plans of the GIT about GII: "We shall build this institute as the centre of Islamic education for the entire Caribbean and South America. We shall also try to get its degree recognized by some reputed university. This will be a modern institute which will cater to the educational and training needs of the Muslim communities of Surinam, Belize, Bahamas and Jamaica".²¹

Maulana Abdul Aziz the Imam of the Meten Meer Zorg Mosque and the executive member of the GIT said in an interview that the institute was being run on generous donations of the GIT members and alumni of GIT in foreign countries. He said, "We do not accept donations from those individuals or organizations who harbour to influence the institute or dictate their own policies. We implement our own policy transpired in our Boards meetings."²²

The Institute though faces shortage of qualified teachers, yet it is gratifying to learn that the institute teachers work very hard and are contented with quite small salaries. The subjects taught at the institute are:-

Hifz al Quran and Tajweed, Tafseer and uloom al Quran, Uloom al Hadith, Fiqh, Seerah, Arabic Language, Islamic movements, Comparative religion, Islamic history, English and other vocational subjects.

My observations about the institute are as follows.

1. Building an institution like GII is indeed a remarkable step towards realization of the objective of Islamic education of the Muslim community of Guyana. The institute is quite helpful in educating the Muslim youth, new Muslims and the prospective leadership of the Muslims (imams etc.) The graduates of this institute are found to be ardent Dawah workers.
2. The faculty of the institute is neither sufficient in number nor properly educated in Islamic disciplines. None of the faculty member is holding master degree. The GIT leadership should consider to improve this shortcoming of the institute by

²¹ Habibur Rahman, Murshid GIT disclosed this in the Question-Answer Session of the 5th Regional Leadership Training Camp held at the GII on Jan. 23, 1995.

²² My interview with Maulana Abdul Aziz, on Dec. 19, 1994.

sending its faculty members to various universities and institution of higher Islamic leanings.

3. The present faculty consists mainly on those shaikhs, who are the graduates of the Middle East universities. They are involved, most of the time in discussing trivial issues like condemning Ta'zeem and Maulood. Sometimes their strong stand on petty issues undermines the unity of Muslims who are weak vis-a-vis other religious denominations. The GIT should prove agility by advising the faculty to abstain indulgence in petty issues and to remain neutral.
4. GIT and GII 's board should consult the experts from outside the GIT to recast the course employed at the GII. The course contents may be reviewed keeping in view the requirements of the Muslim communities around them. Imparting practical skills like delivering Juma Khutba conducting Nikah ceremony, leading prayers and giving Dawah to fellow Muslims , non Muslims to Hindus and the Christian, are the areas which may be given priority during the course of training in the institute.
5. The institute lacks in certain administrative areas. Effective attendance system and proper discipline of the students and teachers can improve the working of the institute to a great extent.
6. The administration of the GII should plan to open a sisters wing in the institute .The sister's Islamic education and training is not accorded due priority. Now when the institute will be shifted to the new site, the GIT can establish a separate block for sisters who lag far behind the brothers in Islamic orientation.

ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN BARBADOS

Barbados stands third after Trinidad and Guyana in the Caribbean with regards to Islamic education for children and the Muslim youth. This tiny island has the largest concentration of imams, alims, (religious scholars) and hafizs, of the Quran. Presently, there are twelve alims who are graduates of Daralal Uloom Deoband, India and 33 hafiz of the Quran.²³ Twelve more

²³ My interview with Dr. Muhammad Yousaf Nagdee in Barbados on Feb. 9, 1995.

alims are in India to complete their education. Two maktab's are being run by the Indian Muslims which educate 120 children. ²⁴

In the Darul Uloom which was established in 1993 by Tablighi Jamaat is in the initial stage. Presently there are five alim and 130 students in Darul Uloom for boys. There can be no doubt that the current Madrassa system has played an important role in Muslim's education in Barbados. However, there are obvious limitations in this system, some of which are:-

the limited time available and the restricted curriculum. The madrassas operate at a time when students are usually tired after a full school day.

We feel that children's primary school needs can still be satisfied within the current primary school structure. The primary system is still intact and does provide a sound basis for a Muslim student's education.

In additions the current madrassa system supplements the primary system and provides Muslim children under age eleven with a sound Islamic basis. For the rich Muslim community of Barbados it is imperative and attained to establish a secondary school. Muslims in Trinidad are pioneers in this field whose experience can be emulated. Darul uloom in Trinidad has also established a secondary level school for girls. To me, establishing a secondary school for girls is more important than secondary school for boys.

Saeed Gottiwala, a businessman in Barbados is enthusiastic in establishing the proposed secondary school for girls. To him, the curriculum for this school would be 50% secular and 50% Islamic. The secular subjects to be offered are:

Mathematics CXC
 English language CXC
 History (World) London
 Geography CXC
 General Science CXC
 Principles of Accounting CXC
 Arabic language London
 Religious knowledge London

²⁴ My interview with Muhammad Degia, on Feb. 8, 1995.

The Islamic subjects will be:

Tajweed, hifz, fiqh, Islamic history, tafseer, hadith, translation of the Holy Quran.

Certificates in Islamic subjects will be awarded by the Darul Uloom through affiliation with a Darul uloom in India.²⁵ Saeed Muhammad anticipated that all the staff for this school will consist of female Muslims who will be well educated and trained in their relative areas. Darul uloom Trinidad will assist in staffing and training the faculty.

He further told the writer that the initial enrollment will be around 30 students. There will be following three classes:

Form 1 (Students 11-12 years)

Form 2 (Students 12-13 years)

Form 3 (Students 13-14 years)

He concluded, "we will correspond with the Ministry of Education to ensure compliance with the Ministry's regulations for educational institutions. We foresee no objections as long as we operate on a non-discriminatory basis and within the boundaries of the Education Act, which does allow for schools of this nature".²⁶ Muslim youth of Barbados is conscious about its future. Those who are inclined to business adopt business career in their prime youth while others who plan to come to public sector achieve higher education. In 1989, the Barbados Muslim community was proud to see two Barbadian Muslim students receive Barbados scholarship for outstanding results in the advanced level Cambridge Examinations. They are Dawood Pandore and Mujahid Khalid. They went to Cambridge University (England) for further studies.²⁷ Hanif Mohammad a newly convert to Islam has opened a madrassa for Muslim children which is being attended by 20 boys and girls. This madrassa is being run by Mohammad Khalwadia who performs all the managerial services without any remuneration. He himself teaches Arabic and

²⁵ My interview with Saeed Muhammad Gotriwala, on Feb. 8, 1995.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ M. Ali. Kettani, "Muslims in the Caribbean", in Muslims in the American Continent edited by M. Ali Kettani and A. M. M. Bow, (Paris: Hariri Cultural Foundations), under press. p. 27.

Islamic studies. ²⁸ There is a need for starting a full time school at Islamic teaching Centre to cater to the needs of new Muslims. The Amir of the ITC also appreciated this need but lamented that ITC was short of financial resources.

However, Suleman Bulbulia may conduct classes on Sundays. New Muslims who hail from Afro-Barbadian stock have expressed their desire to learn the Quran and Hadith. The author advised them to take admission in Darul Uloom run by the adherents of Tablighi Jamaat. The Afro-Barbadian expressed reservations to go to Darul Uloom. They apprehended that they will be discriminated because of being Africans. One new Muslim wanted to get admission in the Guyana Islamic Institute for learning Tajweed and hifz.

It is true that the Darul Uloom is catering mainly to the needs of Gujrati Muslims. Teachers employed there teach either in Urdu or Gujrati. Therefore, there is less possibility for an African Muslim to get admission in the Darul Uloom of Barbados.

CONCLUSION

There are five separate school systems in Trinidad: some are government assisted and others are privately run. One of the main reasons for growth and development of Muslim schools in Trinidad is increased religiosity and retentiveness of the Muslim community. The government assisted schools exhibit a marked difference from the private Muslim institutions with exception to the Trinidad Muslim League Secondary School. These schools place more emphasis on the secular areas while the latter have faced significant problems in merging both the religious and secular areas resulting in a marked inclination towards the religious areas.

Private Muslim institution like Dar ul Uloom are doing a good job but their products need to exhibit a balanced Islamic personality to perform their role in a multi-religious Trinidad.

Guyana Islamic Institute is educating 100% Muslim children but it needs more skilled and qualified academic staff. The Institute should affiliate itself with some recognized institution for accreditation of its courses.

²⁸ Muntaz Ali, Report on visit to the Islands of the Caribbean, June 5-9, 1993, submitted to the Caribbean Islamic Secretariat, Trinidad, p. 6.

Part Three

**ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS
AND
DA'WAH ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE CARIBBEAN**

CHAPTER VII

ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS AND DA'WAH ORGANIZATIONS THE CASE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Islamic institutions and Da'wah Organizations occupy the central place in this study. Since Trinidad is considered as the hub of Islamic activities in the Caribbean so it will take precedence over other communities of the region in the present work. The mutual internal differences during the formative phase tore the only Islamic organization in Trinidad into three fractions, i.e., Tackveeyatul Islamic Association (T.I.A.) Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association (A.S.J.A.) and Trinidad Muslim League (T.M.L.). This disunity or division in the rank and file of the Muslim community developed only because of Maulvi Ameer Ali who returned to Trinidad from Lahore in 1930 with many heretical and deviant views¹. Since it was a significant and crucial stage in the history of the Muslims of Trinidad, so it will be discussed in some detail.

Formative or 'Conflictual' phase of Islamic Organizations in Trinidad:

Syed Abdul Aziz is known for his pioneering Islamic activities in Trinidad. He came to Trinidad from Afghanistan in 1883. In a laudable effort to boost up the Muslim community, Aziz organized in 1893 the first Islamic organization known as the Islamic Guardian Association.² The activities of this organization are not well known now. The crowning achievement of Syed Abdul Aziz was his role in uniting the leading Muslims of Trinidad in 1926. He founded and became the first President of the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association.³ This was the first organization to be accepted and recognized by the Muslims and the then colonial Government as the official representative body of the island's Muslim population.⁴ Syed Abdul

¹ R.J. Smith, Muslim East Indians in Trinidad: Under Acculturative Conditions, (University of Pennsylvania: 1963), p.185.

² Ibid., p. 165.

³ The proper name according to Arabic grammar will be Taqviatul Islam Association which means Society for the strength of Islam.

⁴ R.J. Smith, p. 165.

Aziz was a dynamic leader among the Muslims but his potential was not appreciated by his fellow Muslims. They were willing to accept anyone with a semblance of religious knowledge and authority. As a result of their curiosity and anxiousness to find a typically religious authority in their midst, they corresponded with "The Working Mission" in England. In response, Moulvi Fazal Karim Khan Durrani arrived in Trinidad in 1921. It seems difficult to believe that the traditional Muslims of Trinidad would have sought assistance from a mission of the Ahmadiyyah or Qadiani Movement. Qadianis believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadiyan, India, is a prophet after Muhammad (ASW). But it looks that the Trinidad Muslims were totally unaware of the beliefs of this group. To Muslims, "any person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (ASW) as the last of the prophets or claims to be a prophet in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (ASW), or recognizes such a claimant as a prophet or a religious reformer is not a Muslim."⁵

During his two years' stay in Trinidad, Moulvi Durrani established a school for teaching Arabic and also engaged himself in debates with Christian clergymen. Outwitting the opponents in the debates he earned some repute among native Muslims. The Muslim leaders, however, failed to realize the unorthodox orientation of the Mission of Qadianis. They "sought help, any help. Moulvi Durrani answered their plea, and as a result of his preaching, they inherited a legacy from which the Island's Islam has never fully recovered"⁶. Not only his beliefs were detrimental to Muslim existence, he did cast doubts on the very foundations of Islam: the exclamation of faith. He sowed the divisive seeds of dissension among Muslims by cultivating a 'plant' in the person of Moulvi Ameer Ali of Siparia who was later sent by him to Lahore to the Ahmadiyah Anjuman Esha'at-e-Islam. He was appointed as Mufti of T.I.A. on his completion of training at Lahore. No one considered this possibility that one trained at an

⁵ Mehmood Ahmad Ghazi, Qadiani Problem and Position of Lahori Group, Islamic Book Foundation, (Islamabad: Paisal Masjid, 1991), p.61.

⁶ R.J. Smith, p.169

Ahmadiyyah institution might well imbibe some of that philosophy. This was a tumultuous period. R.J. Smith has described this period as following:

An accurate picture of those troubled years of the thirties must be derived and interpreted. The facts one gleans are colored by the positions of particular informants. Everyone took sides. There were no neutralists. The press is of no help; very little was publicly reported. Other documents available to us all defend particular points of view. It was claimed by the orthodox or traditional Muslims of that time (1930-31) that Ameer Ali was confirmed Mirzai or Ahmadi⁷.

Ameer Ali accepted Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani as an "Interpreter" of the law after Muhammad. As opposed to the Muslim belief he considered Jesus dead and that he would not return because he was not removed alive to Heaven, that also Prophet Muhammad (SAW) ascension (Miraj) to Heavens, was of spiritual nature and not physical as most Muslims believe; and that the Qur'an does not call for delusion of women.⁸ This was the birth of Ameer Ali's so called 'Non-Conformist Islam' and the beginning of thirty years of intra-group feuding and fragmentation of Trinidad Muslims. It may be remembered that he spoke not as an individual who could be ignored but as the Mufti of T.I.A. He did, in fact, shatter all semblance of Muslims' tranquility from 1930 on. As Mufti of T.I.A., he had a ready platform from which to speak. At every opportunity, he explained his philosophy but his words had the ring of heresy to many of his listeners. He held island wide debates with Haji Ruknudeen Mea who succeeded Syed Abdul Aziz as Kazi. Ameer Ali believed in liberty of Women. "He maintained that there is no Quranic injunction requiring purdah (Hijab)"⁹. Ameer Ali not only argued against the separating partition or screen seen in all traditional masjids but argued in favour of women praying alongside their husbands or other male relatives. The Mufti's thoughts were not agreeable to a majority of the orthodox Muslims. T.I.A. members sought to withdraw their support and membership from the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association, leaving it to Ameer Ali and his friends. A new organization was in the making, steps were taken to get government's recognition of the second Muslim organization. This was accomplished on 3rd April, 1932 at

⁷ R.J. Smith, p.171.

⁸ Ibid., p.172.

⁹ R.J. Smith, p.179.

Chaguanas under the leadership of Haji Ruknudeen Meah with the name of Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association or popularly known as A.S.J.A.

Anjuman and Association carry the same meanings. Since 'Anjuman' sounds Indian so it was retained as component of their organizations' name. Though Ameer Ali himself has been protesting against emergence of sects in the body of Trinidad Muslims but in fact, he has contributed to this phenomenon more than anybody else.

After inception of A.S.J.A., T.I.A. started a campaign against incorporation of the former claiming that there was no need for another body, since the T.I.A. "represents the entire Muslims of this colony."¹⁰.

The Comforter, monthly organ of the T.I.A. edited by Amir Ali used to be full of charges against the A.S.J.A. in those days.

The Comforter, on the one hand, stood for the innocence of T.I.A. and against schism on the other hand. This was the style of writings of this journal in the trying days of 1930s. The T.I.A. journal abounded with accusations like "Irresponsible mischief-makers of A.S.J.A. are causing disunity and disruption in The Muslim Community"¹¹. This was indeed a difficult time in which mud-slinging was rampant and dictates of personal vengeance were at work. To every statement, there was a counter statement. This was hardly the manner in which to seek reconciliation.

Haji Ruknudeen Meah of A.S.J.A. and Moulvi Ameer Ali of T.I.A. would issue challenges to each other for public debates which were used as the forum to discuss controversial issues. Ruknudeen did understand English but he could not express himself in it. He often had his son-in-law, Ramzan Ali to translate what he said. Hundred of Muslims attended these debates which were held at the Palladium Cinema in Tunapuna and at other public places¹². It became

¹⁰ Ameer Ali: The comforter, 3:2, 1936, Trinidad, p.2.

¹¹ Ibid., 1933, p.15.

¹² Wazifa Susan Ali, The Historical Context of the Indian Diaspora: Haji Rucknudeen Meah and the consolidation of the Muslim Community of Trinidad and Tobago, 1893-1963, (Trinidad: University of West Indies, St. Augustine, 1995), p.30.

the common practice for emotional youth to hurl abuse and words of ridicule at the leaders. Many of these debates often broke up in arguments and fights where police had to be called in to maintain law and order.¹³

However, despite all the campaign launched by Ameer Ali, A.S.J.A. was incorporated by ordinance No.24 of 1935. A.S.J.A.'s constitution aimed at following the teachings of Islam; to protect and promote the religion; inculcate the spirit of unity among Muslim, through their all-round development; to build institutions and to seek their establishment of a single body of Muslims adhering to the Ahl-al-Sunnah wa-al Jamaah school of Thought.¹⁴

Although their basic ideology and doctrines remained the same as both associations wished to propagate the message of Islam and to show non-Muslims the comprehensiveness of Islam, they unfortunately could only succeed in impairing Islamic unity from within. This antagonism ate at the core of the Muslim community of Trinidad and inhibited both the organizations to make any greater breakthrough. The gulf had widened to the extent that there were two distinct communities in the Muslim brotherhood.¹⁵

Despite continued inter-organizational squabbling efforts on national level for registration of Muslim marriages and divorces were successfully waged which culminated in enforcement of ordinance in 1936. Muslim marriage rites and divorce procedures were legalized. Though efforts for this ordinance were earlier made by Syed Abdul Aziz but T.I.A. and A.S.J.A. won the battle ultimately. Both organizations expressed their full support for the bill which they believed sought to preserve all rights and privileges enjoyed under the Islamic Marriage Law.¹⁶ This cohesion and co-ordination culminated in promulgation of ordinance of 1935 which entailed legalization of Muslim marriages¹⁷. One is left to wonder what other great achievements could

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ M. Rafeeq, "History of Islam and Muslims in Trinidad", in the Souvenir Brochure of the Jinnah Memorial Mosque, (Trinidad, 25th April, 1954), p.32.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.33.

¹⁶ J.C. Jha, "The Background of the Legalization of Non-Christian Marriages in Trinidad and Tobago" in East Indians in the Caribbean, n.d. p.22.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.129.

have come to pass had a foreign ideology (Qadianism) not been intruded into the Muslim Community. However, the Muslim community had incurred an irreparable loss due to intrusion of this foreign ideology into it.

In order to launch a campaign of education, A.S.J.A. brought from Lahore (now in Pakistan, then in India) an all rounder, Maulana Nazir Ahmad Simab, who was a teacher, educational planner and preacher. He, later, formed an organization entitled, "Tablighul Islam". He prepared sermons (Khutbat) and distributed them weekly to every Masjid in Trinidad. Simab realized that an additional association will make the situation more difficult, so decided to form a coalition with the T.I.A. "An amalgamation did occur in about 1943. The Tabligh-ul-Islam was formally abolished, and all of its members were absorbed into the T.I.A".¹⁸ Ameer Ali decided to relinquish the life presidency of the T.I.A. which proved to be his undoing. Within a year, the former Tabligh ul Islam membership grew numerically superior to the T.I.A. The result was an election defeat for all former T.I.A. office bearers. This was another blow for Ameer Ali. The situation was intolerable to Ameer Ali. He saw everything going out of his control. There was no way left for Ameer Ali except to defect from the very association he had, for more than fifteen years, called his own.¹⁹

Ameer Ali retreated with his small but exceedingly loyal band of 'non-conformist' followers and in 1947 formed a rather isolated association, the Trinidad Muslim League (T.M.L.), which was incorporated in 1950. In 1957-58, the T.M.L. had only 1500 men, women and children in its 'non-conformist' fold²⁰.

The TML's association with the Qadianis ended in 1975 when the non-Qadianis gained a majority position in the council and put the league on non-Qadian track. After that, there have

¹⁸ R.J. Smith, p.183.

¹⁹ R.J. Smith, p.184.

²⁰ Ibid.

been consistent efforts to clean the TML from the Qadiani influence and "a stage has reached when its office-bearers/claim that you may not find a single Qadiani in our ranks."²¹

THE ISLAMIC REVIVALIST TREND

There is a general awareness prevailing among the Muslim masses in almost every part of the World that Islam is not a set of dogmas but a way of life. This concept has gained currency mainly due to the work of Islamic movements which started in Egypt and Pakistan in the first half of the twentieth century. Ideas of these Islamic movements have travelled to Europe and Americas. So, one witnesses a wave of resurgence at an international level and the Caribbean is no exception. Among the Muslim masses, this revival is seen as a reference for collective identity, as a symbol of self-assertion and consciousness opposed to alien penetration and cultural domination. This revival is also a reaction in part not to modernization per se but to Westernization which overlooks and sometime despises national traditions and cultural symbols. This Islamic revival is seen at work in many Muslim countries like Iran, Sudan, Algeria, Turkey and Pakistan. The masses in these countries voice their demand to enforce Shariah and abide by it instead of following imported western models. There is also a change in the language of the politics and an increasing use of religious social symbols, e.g. the growing of beards and the use of Islamic clothing. In addition, socio - political groups emerge in the name of Islam and Islamic organizations are established. These conditions generally apply to areas where the Muslim population forms a majority. Most of these conditions are also visible in those parts of the world where Muslims live in a minority situation. Islamic organizations like Islamic Da'wah Movement (I.D.M.), University of West Indies Islamic Society (U.W.I.I.S.), Islamic Trust, Iqra Productions, Muslim Credit Union (M.C.U.), Islamic Ladies, Social and Cultural Association and United Islamic Organizations (UIO) exhibit Islamic resurgence trends. T.I.A. and A.S.J.A. are traditional organizations while I.M.G., T.M.L. and Darul uloom are in between these two streams.

²¹. My Interview with Nazeer Muhammad, Secretary General T.M.L. on Feb. 4, 1995.

The Islamic Da'wah Movement (I.D.M.)

In 1975 a group of Muslims from all the Muslim organizations held discussions with the aim of formulating a programme of Da'wah to reach the Non-Muslims of Trinidad and Tobago. These discussions led to the formation of the Islamic Trust (I.T.) which was registered in 1975 under the Companies Act. The Chairman was Zabar Baksh (A.S.J.A.), and the trustees included Kamal Hosein, Yusuf Mitchell (I.M.G.) Samad Abdul Wahid (T.I.A.) and Alyassa Abdullaah and Hydar Ali²². The main fields of activities of the Trust were Da'wah and Education by means of which it sought to strengthen the community and act as a guiding force for the Muslims.

About four years later, it was felt that the work of the Trust was not sufficiently recognized and so it became more public oriented. In September 1985, the name was changed to the Islamic Da'wah Movement and this new organization was registered under the Companies Act. Today, the Islamic Trust functions within the I.D.M. as a bookshop²³.

In keeping with the worldwide resurgence, this organization sees itself as part of the International Islamic Movement²⁴ which seeks to establish an Islamic system of life in its entirety. Based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, it sets out to create an Islamic individual and then an Islamic Family and ultimately an Islamic Community.

The objectives of the I.D.M. are: (1) to acquaint Muslims with the call of the Islamic Movement (2) to disseminate the message of Islam to the people in Trinidad and Tobago. (3) to organize those who agree with the call of the I.D.M. and to provide them with sound intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical training for all. (4) to co-operate and co-ordinate the plans with other Islamic organizations in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the I.D.M. (5) to co-operate with individuals and groups in the promotion of good

²² Nafeesa Charles, Recent Trends in the Muslim Community of Trinidad and Tobago, P.26.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ I.D.M. Constitution, (Trinidad: 1987), p. 4.

and forbidding evil in accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah and (6) to make every effort to contact, co-operate and co-ordinate with Islamic movements outside of Trinidad and Tobago²⁵.

As has already been stated the methods used by the organization in the achievement of its objectives are in keeping with the Quran and the Sunnah. There is an emphasis on lectures, the use of the media and on reforming character. It publishes an irregular bulletin called the "Message". The organization sees itself as being different from the older organizations which are more traditional and concerned with prayers and rituals.

To propagate an Islamic way of life, the I.D.M. focuses on education and Tarbiyah (training). This is conducted at two levels - first in the study - circles (work units) and at a community level²⁶.

In the study circles emphasis is placed on education in Arabic script, commentary on the Quran and Hadith, the fundamentals of Islam and Fiqh (rules and regulations). In addition, at a community level, camps are held and basic Islamic courses are offered to the people.

In an effort to strengthen and expand their organization and to propagate Islam, Trinidad and Tobago have been divided into four zones - North, Central, South and Tobago. Each zone has a zonal head who has the responsibility to develop programmes for the respective area, to give Da'wah to Muslims and non-Muslims, to establish zonal funds to support their work in the area and to collect Zakat and to distribute among the needed.

Iqra Productions (Focus on Islam)

The programme "Focus on Islam" is the local television feature series designed specifically on Islam. This was founded by Fazila Khan and Zabar Baksh and incorporated in 1988. Previously, there were programmes such as "Religious Unity" and "Meditation" which were limited in their scope. The aim of this programme is to disseminate the teachings of Islam to the public especially to the non-Muslim population²⁷.

²⁵ I.D.M. Constitution. (Trinidad: 1987), p. 56.

²⁶ Islamic Workers' Training Manual Book 2, (Trinidad: Sanjuan, 1987), first edition. p. 3.

²⁷ My Interview with Ms. Fazila Khan, February 5, 1995.

The programme is characterized by an exposition of (a) basic Islamic concepts, (b) Islam as a way of life and (c) contemporary problems - alcoholism, drug addiction, the status of women and international issues - e.g; The Palestine problem. It links Islamic principles and caters to the requirements of a wide cross-section of the community. The programme's directors have received feed-back from both the Muslim and Non-Muslim viewers on various subjects as well as those persons who are in need of assistance. The deep public interest and the realization of the seriousness of this enterprise and its importance has led to the establishment of a company to oversee this project.

The Television broadcasts have been ceased momentarily in 1995 due to lack of adequate wherewithal to continue financing such a dynamic piece of work. Mr. Zabar Baksh was hopeful that the "Focus on Islam will be soon back on air"²⁸.

In general, the activities of the service-oriented organizations are in keeping with the goal of the international Islamic movement that is to ensure that Muslims lead Islamic lives. These organizations reflect a determined effort by Muslims to control their own lives and manage their own affairs economic or social. The latter aspect is demonstrated by the activities of the Jamaat Al Muslimeen, who have become actively involved in dealing with the drug problem and other welfare issues --- health, education, and assistance for those in need. In addition, the necessity for Da'wah work in this society cannot be overemphasized. As such, new organizations like the I.D.M. have been established. In order to ensure that the message of Islam reaches the entire population, the media - to be specific, the television programme "Focus on Islam" has been produced.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES ISLAMIC SOCIETY (UWIIS)

The University of West Indies Islamic Society (UWIIS) was founded in 1969. It is an organization of students on both the St. Augustine Campus and the Mount Hope Medical

²⁸ My brief interview with Zabar Bakhsh at the UWI on February 1, 1995.

Sciences Complex. It derives its membership from students, and academic and non-academic staff from both centres of learning.²⁹

Its level of activities has fluctuated over the years since this has in general, been influenced by the devotion and quality of the membership and its leadership. Its leadership estimates the popularity and acceptance of the society by turn out of Muslims at the Friday Congregation at the campus. Usually an attendance of hundred Muslims at the Jumaa' prayer considered to be a fairly good number.³⁰

The UWIS has of an Executive Committee and the General Assembly with roles and responsibilities determined in a constitution. The Executive Committee is accountable to the General Assembly and is elected annually during the month of October every year. The members of the Executive Committee are President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and one Faculty Representative from each of the seven faculties.³¹

The objectives defined by the UWIS are to help students at the two centres of higher learning, to carry out social, civic, charitable, literary, athletic, scientific, research and other Islamic activities to strengthen fraternal relationship among students and to promote friendly relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (for Da'wah purpose) and to present Islam to the non-Muslims.

During each academic year, a great deal of effort is exerted by its members in making the student population aware of the Islamic Society's activities. The activities include: Publication, sports, film shows, students counselling, study circles, hikes, public lectures, seminars, picnics, Islamic book displays, iftars, dinners, Eid celebrations, Arabic and Tajweed classes and conducting Islamic civilization courses.³²

²⁹ My Interview with Dr. Riza Muhammad head of Education Committee of UWIS on February 4, 1995.

³⁰ Haroon Ali Soobratee, Situation Report on UWIS, unpublished, n.d, p.1.

³¹ My Interview with Mirza Ali Mohammad on February 5, 1995.

³² My interview with Dr. Riza Mohammad, February 4, 1995.

I had attended a class of Islamic Civilization Course in January 1995 and was impressed by the discipline and devotion of the participants of the course. The course virtually instills devotion and zeal to study and work for Islam in the participants consisting of both the genders. One sister Shareeda Edoe from the Faculty of Social Sciences had remarked: "It was heartening to be amid colleagues and peers pursuing not only academic excellence but also fulfilling their simple duties as Muslims". I was informed that many students of the University had converted to Islam because of the Da'wah activities of the Islamic Society. The members of the UWIS are free from any sectarian, ethnic, parochial or racial discrimination. They coordinate with each and every group of Muslims in Trinidad and are considered to be an extension of Islamic Da'wah Movement in the University of the West Indies. They often organize their seminars at the Islamic Centre at Kelly Village Caroni run by the Islamic Missionaries Guild. The professionals of the Islamic Society are invited by the ASJA, IMG and the Islamic Academy to assist as organizers and co-ordinators of their various activities. In 1990, it had organized an exhibition in collaboration with the ASJA entitled, "The World of Islam" at the Piarco Airport of Trinidad.³³

Islamic Society takes active part in the welfare of the Muslim community and Jamaats. Its workers are usually visible during prayers in the mosques in the vicinity of U.W.I. viz. Jinnah Memorial Masjid, Curepe Masjid, Bamboo Masjid and Tunapuna Masjid.

The Students Guild of the University oversees the activities of all the student groups and clubs on the campus and is funded by a fee paid annually by each registered student on the campus. This fund supports the operation of a cafeteria, pub, Guild Office, and the activities of student groups.

In 1991 the UWIS was voted by the Student's Guild as being the Most Active religious group on the campus.³⁴ There are about five per cent Muslim students at the campus³⁵.

³³ My interview with Mirza Ali Mohammad, February 5, 1995.

³⁴ Haroon Ali Soobrattee, *Op. Cit.*

³⁵ Despite the high level of education of the Executive members of the Islamic Society, there seems to be deficiency when it comes to organizing, planning and

Another problem is the image the UWIS projects to the student population (Muslim and non-Muslim). To some, the UWIS is perceived as an exclusive club or clique. Since the core group is small comprising 10-12 students who are closely knit and there is no organized and determined effort to invite and expand participation. Following leaders of the society are well known in Trinidad for their active participation in the University and the Muslim Community: Dr. Firdaus Kamalodeen, Dr. Riza Mohammad, Ikram Mohammad and Haroon Ali Soobrattee.

One very significant service of the UWIS towards the Muslim Community of Trinidad is holding Eid gatherings. The UWIS has been able to cater to the needs of its members on Campus and at the same time create an atmosphere of 'Eid' festivities by inviting the neighbouring Muslim Community to participate not only in the Eid prayer but also in the organizing of the event.

In 1995, approximately one thousand Muslims participated in the open air Eid which was held for the first time at Nestle's grounds, Valsayn. This open air Eid prayer has now become a land mark in Trinidad. Print and electronic media give coverage to Eid news and the Eid Khutba is broadcast live on radio. Important Muslim personalities are invited to deliver the Khutba and lead the prayer. The Organizing Committee of Eid prayer and celebrations has been receiving liberal support from Muslim individuals and the business community. The entire project is covered through donations. An atmosphere of brotherhood and festivity is a main objective of the UWIS and this certainly is achieved. Another benefit the Muslims of Trinidad derive from this open air Eid is that they get to know each other transcending the barriers of Jamaats and organizations.

The Islamic Ladies Social and Cultural Association (ILSCA) of Trinidad and Tobago

This is an introduction to a dynamic organization of the Muslim women established about twenty six years ago in Trinidad and Tobago in Latin America. Perhaps no other Muslim women

making long term decisions. The UWIS is hampered to a great deal by the absence of an office where meetings or discussions are held and the Reference Library may be housed. Presently the Reference Library is kept in the office of a Muslim Lecturer, Hayder Ali (Ex-Senator) and is open only when he is there during regular University hours.'

organization seems more active and effective than the Islamic Ladies Social and Cultural Association (ILSCA). It was founded in February 1971 to realize the following objectives:-

1. To act in accordance with creed of the Association, i-e; the members of the Association are Muslim Ladies who subscribe to the belief of oneness of Allah (SWT).
2. To advance and promote the religion of Islam in Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere.
3. To do social and cultural work which conforms with the principles of Islam.
4. To render humanitarian service in the country and elsewhere.
5. To carryout family and child welfare programs, to provide prenatal advice and to assist or sponsor under-privileged or destitute children and families.
6. To encourage arts crafts, sports and cultural activities.
7. To publish literature and periodicals pertaining to the activities and objectives of the Association.
8. To organize dinners, tea parties, bazaars, jumble sales and other activities for raising funds for charitable purposes and for maintaining the Association and carrying out its objectives.³⁶

The objectives of the Association are comprehensive and all-embracing. My personal opinion about the Association is that it has made all possible effort to achieve each bit of its objectives. Many organizations formulate high sounding objectives but hardly translate them into action but the case of ILSCA is different.

This Association serves not only Muslims but also the non-Muslim members of society. Perhaps it was the first attempt of gathering together of the Muslim ladies into one consolidated, social and cultural organization irrespective of their connection with any Islamic body. Dr. Jone Homaida Kazim, a lady from Trinidad Muslim elite, has been the moving spirit behind the activities right from formation of the Association till today (July 1997). Four formative meetings of the Association were held on June 17, 1970, November 8, 1970, November 22, 1970 and

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The Islamic Ladies Social and Cultural Association Brochure, 20th Anniversary 1970-1990.

December 16, 1970 to discuss respectively the formation of the Association, aims and objectives, formation of a steering committee and holding of a General Assembly of the Muslim ladies to finalize aims and objectives. The fourth meeting took place in the form of an inaugural meeting held at the Gaylord Restaurant which was attended by 140 Muslim ladies. Mrs. Zalayhar Hassan Ali, wife of Mr. Hassan Noor Ali, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago chaired the meeting.

In the later stage, Dr. Jone Kazim's husband Dr. Ibrahim Kazim also joined the Association as a resource person. His contribution was mainly in the field of education and Culture. An extra-ordinary meeting of the Association held at the St. Ann's Community Centre on April 25, 1971 concluded with adoption of amended Constitution, registration of 38 individual members and affiliation of three Muslim Women's Associations. The First General Meeting of the Association was held on July 25, 1971. Headquarters were setup at 17 Valleton Avenue, Maraval. Election of officers and representatives from the branches of the Association and from the Muslim Women's organizations were held. From the very beginning it was suggested that the operations of the association be decentralized so that it would be more convenient for people to participate. As a result four branches were formed according to geographic areas. Besides the central body, two branches were established at San Fernando and one at Penal.

From the very beginning, ILSCA has managed Maktab classes in areas such as Bamboo settlement, Curepe, Maraval, Woodbrook, Santa Cruz, St. Augustine, Valsayn and St. Madeline. Classes for adults have also been held in the Valsayn, St. Augustine, Curepe area where apart from teaching the recitation of the Holy Qurān, adults have been encouraged to participate in discussions on Islamic topic. Each branch adopted this programme and members of ILSCA would meet once a week at various homes and suras of the Quran would be recited and explained. Record of ILSCA reveals that a lady named Hajin Batoolan Imam was appointed as Islamic Education officer who was deeply involved in teaching Arabic, Urdu, Quranic recitation and Fiqh. She taught these subjects for eighteen years. In Port of Spain, a lady Hajin K. Haider Ali opened several such sessions for the benefit of Muslim ladies and children.

During early 1970s religious education had taken place in the form of lectures and seminars on family life in Islam, pre-marital counselling and marriage guidance (in an Islamic

context). Qur'an Khanees recitation of the Holy Qur'an) were held especially at the homes where bereavements had occurred. Islamic literature was distributed among youth and seminars were held on topics which served to introduce Islam among the interested groups.

The ILSCA has played active role in motivating the Muslim ladies of Trinidad to participate in religious and cultural activities. Iftar dinners were organized by many members at various masjids and women were encouraged to attend Taraweeh prayers at the masjids which was an enjoyable and spiritual experience for most of the women. Members of ILSCA pooled their Zakat which was later distributed by a Committee of Muslim Women among deserving and indigent Muslim families. Boxes of foodstuff and clothing were also distributed. Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations took many forms such as dinners, visits, parties, and distribution of gifts to orphans and children; radio, press and television messages. Some other activities like holding exhibitions on Islamic calligraphy, tatting, ceramics, crochet and embroidery were the main events of Eid-ul-Fitr in 1971.

There are many social activities of ILSCA which need dozen of pages to be described but one very interesting activity was their honouring of brides-to-be. The young members of the ILSCA who were soon to be married were gifted Kitchen sets, cutlery sets or decoration items. "Henna" ceremony was performed by applying "Henna" to the palms of the bride's hands and also to her friends in the most intricate designs and delicate patterns. Other ILSCA members would sing songs. The bride-to-be was then dressed in a most beautiful rose-coloured sequin embroidered chiffon 'Saree' and good wishes were bestowed upon her.

The ILSCA is predominantly inclined towards customs and rites commonly regarded in the Caribbean as traits of Indian culture, e.g; holding "Mushaira", Meelad and Qaseeda functions.

On May 1985 new headquarters at #4, Queen's Park West were made available to ILSCA under the name, at this new venue "The Islamic Academy" and a central maktab was opened. By 1986 a free medical service was introduced every Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and in 1987 it was decided that this service be extended to patients who could not afford the journey to Port of Spain. Doctors situated all over the island volunteered to see such patients during their office hours once through a screening system these individuals were considered eligible for free medical attention.

The writer has met some young enthusiastic medical doctors in Trinidad who have been devoting time out of their holidays to work as volunteers in the Medical Camps of ILSCA, They enjoy this experience and regard this opportunity a means to reach out the masses for Da'wah.

In 1987 after the male counterparts of this industrious group of women became actively involved in the Association. A large building with spacious and many facilities was purchased at No.3 Rapsey Street as the "Islamic Academy's" headquarters. In 1993 a second medical service was setup in Freeport. Many would agree that the ILSCA's contribution in social service has been commendable. In 1974, still a new organization, members of the Association journeyed to the sugar belt where families were undergoing hardships and supplied boxes of food stuffs, clothing and financial aid to these people.

Their sponsorship programme, which to date consists of 80 families, comprises the needy, destitute, the ailing, widows and cripples who are fed and clothed. In fact the Association has now been approached to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Consumer Affairs through which a feeding program is in operation where foodstuff is channelled to an average of 450 people per month.

A van recently donated by Mr. Robert Amar Group of Companies will be of enormous help in contacting the needy families in the stringent economic times. "The Islamic Academy's" donations have been furnished to other deserving causes in the form of scientific equipment, kitchen appliances, books and Islamic literature.

The Bibi Fatimah Kindergarten was established in 1988 on the Rapsey Street grounds and is registered with the Ministry of Education. The Bibi Fatimah Primary School was established in September 1991 as well as the Bibi Amina Institute where academic, vocational and household management skills are imparted. In 1992 a scholarship programme was introduced which has been benefitted by 22 students of the University of the West Indies and the Darul Uloom. The financial assistance in the way of scholarships has reached a total of T.T.\$79,000.00.

In 1992 a Family Life Bureau was formed to look after the Muslim community's pressing needs regarding family life from the pre-marital stages. Pre-marital counselling and marriage guidance have been instituted at regional levels. Through this Bureau a youth arm has been established whose existence has no doubt enhanced the work and social life of "The Islamic Academy".

Although this Association is newer than some 'established' organizations but list of its achievements runs longer. It is a women association but has been far more effective than most of the institutions run by men. The Association has gained respect, over the years, in the eyes of Muslims and non-Muslims alike through its social and Da'wah work.

The Islamic Trust

The Islamic Trust was formed in 1975 as a charity organization. It had seven trustees, which include Yusuf Mitchel and Zabar Baksh. The Trust had been instrumental in promoting Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims in Trinidad. The Trust was the first Muslim organization to be a truly integrated group -- for the first time African and Indians were working together for the promotion of Islam.³⁷

The Trust founders were all influenced by Sayed Hussain Pasha, a vibrant Islamic activist who hailed from India and was on mission from MSA, North America. Pasha introduced to a group of young African and East Indian Muslims, a dynamic face of Islam in Trinidad. Islam traditionally had been centered around the spiritual aspect of the religion. Pasha presented the works of contemporary Islamic scholars (like Maudoodi and Hasan al Banna) to these young Muslims showing Islam as an economic, political, social, military, cultural and spiritual force - a complete way of life. Pasha was forced to leave Trinidad due to pressure from traditionalist Muslims. Those trained by Pasha then organized themselves into the Islamic Trust, a service bureau. These young Muslims, bursting to spread the good news of a vitalized and dynamic Islam, soon set up classes in various mosques. Their brand of Islam was not accepted by the traditionalists and their workers: were more often turned out of mosques. There were many a confrontations, but today the policy of these Muslims is "toward conciliation without compromising Islam"³⁸.

The Trust aimed at educating and propagating Islam, upgrading the performance of Muslim institutions and organizations and acting as a cementing force for the Muslims of the

³⁷ My Interview with Zabar Baksh on January 31, 1995.

³⁸ My Interview with Mirza Ali Mohammad on Feb. 4, 1995.

entire region.³⁹ The Trust brought out a monthly publication called The Muslim Standard which dealt, apart from Islamic topics, with national and international issues. The Trust while still in existence, has given birth to the Islamic Dawah Movement. The Trust still does significant Islamic work like operating a Hajj trip at the lowest price in Trinidad. Members meet regularly for Islamic study circles. The Islamic Trust began the Muslim Credit Union (M.C.U.), an interest-free economic system for Muslims. Their Youth Brigade is responsible for Islamic conventions.

Darul Uloom

The Darul Uloom was established on January 1, 1984. This institute is unique in the Caribbean because it offers secondary education and Islamic learning within a single institution. The secular secondary education upto A 'level is also taught so that the students will be competent in their Islamic and secular career⁴⁰. Students of the Boy's college are trained to lead the daily Salat (prayer) and to deliver the Friday Khutba (Sermon)⁴¹. Boys from the Caribbean and United States of America are also studying at the Darul Uloom. The Institution provides qualified teachers for all classes. Both the Boys' College and the Girls' College of the Darul Uloom provide a five year programme for seven O'level subjects and an intermediate course in Islamic Studies. Students are accepted after writing the Common Entrance Exams from the age of 11 years. Special courses are conducted for boys who have completed their secondary education. The five year programme includes the following subjects: English, Mathematics, History, General Science, Biology, Principles of Business, Principles of Accounts, Arabic Language, Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic History, Quranic Studies, Hadith Studies, Tajweed and Hifz of the Holy Quran.⁴²

³⁹ Abdullah Hakim Quick, "Deeper Roots: Muslims in the Caribbean before Columbus to the Present, AICCLA Papers 1, (London: MILS, 1990) p.38.

⁴⁰ A Brochure on the Educational Programmes of the Darul Uloom (Trinidad: Rashad Avenue, Cunnipia, 9th July, 1994).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

According to a 1993 report, there are 80 resident students at the Boys' College and 40 Students at the Girls' College. Part-time adult students are currently 425 in number. Darul Uloom concedes that its monthly expense runs into the vicinity of \$12,000 U.S. dollars and since only 25% of its funds is derived from fees from resident students, the remaining 75% is donated and the institution is happy to utilize Zakat money for needy students.⁴³

The part-time educational programmes are, Tafseer or Commentary of the Holy Quran, Islamic Jurisprudence, Arabic language and Tajweed courses in the Holy Quran. The Full-time, five year courses include, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, General Science, Biology, Social Studies, Arabic Language, Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic History, Qur'anic Studies, Hadith Studies, Intonation and Memorization of the Holy Qur'an.

Upon successful completion of the five year courses, an Alim/Alimah course can be taken whilst simultaneously pursuing the Advanced Level in secular education. The Department of Islamic Legal Affairs of the Darul Uloom conducts the Mufti Course for Islamic graduates (those who have completed the Alim course) and issues Islamic legal opinions (*fatwa*) to the public and also offers counselling with an Islamic perspective, free of charge.

Darul Uloom is treading the path of progress. In its 13th annual Jalsa, (Graduation Ceremony) held on July 6, 1996 which was presided over by Mufti Ashraf Ali, son of the late patron Maulana Abu Saood Ali was attended by over 1700 Muslims from all over Trinidad and Tobago. It was disclosed in the report that ten students, seven male and three female, had successfully completed the bachelors of Arabic and Islamic Studies degree course developed by the Darul Uloom. Amongst these ten students, three were full time having entered the Darul Uloom at form one. The seven other, were part time students. In addition, 210 students young and old, male and female, graduated in various courses in Islamic studies.⁴⁴

Recently appointed principal following the demise of Mufti Shabil Ali, Mufti Waseem Khan, a graduate of Darul Uloom Karachi, addressing the ceremony said that the objectives of the Darul Uloom are to produce graduates who will sincerely obey Allah and His Prophet (ASW), and will efficiently serve the cause of Islam along with the responsibilities of family life,

⁴³ A Report on Darul Uloom activities, (Trinidad: Cunupia, 1993) p.2.

⁴⁴ The Caribbean Muslim Standard, Issue 08-1996-49,p.20.

such that they become beneficial to themselves, their family members and the Muslim community and the society at large.⁴⁵

Abdul Aziz Trust

The sons of the late Abdul Aziz Kudrat (d.1952) formed this trust. Registered in 1978, the Trust operates two medical clinics free of charge, located at Dow Village, California and Samson Village, Claxton Bay. Their centre, located in Dow Village is situated near to the maktab. The Trust is concerned with propagating Islam, providing financial assistance to the needy and visiting hospitalized individuals.

Tablighi Jamaat

The main interest of the Tablighi Jamaat is reformation of individuals. Members visit people's houses and mosques to teach them. Contact has been established with similar organizations in Africa, North America and India. The leader in Trinidad and Tobago is Maulana Abdus Salaam, a teacher at Darul Uloom.

Jama'at-al-Muslemeen

Trinidad had the fortune of the presence of Sayed Husain Pasha, as mentioned earlier, who had spent a great deal of time instructing young Muslims of Trinidad about the basics of Islam. These young Muslims included both the Africans and East Indians. Pasha left Trinidad due to various reasons but those trained by him organized themselves into an umbrella group known as the Islamic Trust in 1975.

During the same time a small group of African men and women organized the Dar ul Islam and worked with brothers and sisters in other Islands of the Caribbean especially Grenada and Dominica⁴⁶.

In 1977 the leader of the Islamic Party in North America, Yusuf Muzzafaruddeen Hamid visited Trinidad and developed the nucleus for an arm of his Washington-based community. This

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Kwesi Atiba, A Report on Islam in Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad: Al-Muslimeen Headquarters, 1-Mucurapo Road, 1989), p.1.

move resulted in some people's defecting the Islamic Trust and later the majority of the Dar ul Islam associates joined the Islamic Party⁴⁷.

The Islamic Party was an active organization which, in 1978 inaugurated the Community Mosque Complex in Laventille that remained the focus of attention until the party became defunct in 1980.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Trust continued its activities on national and Caribbean level. It sent its members to Guyana to participate in one year Islamic Training Course organized by the Guyana Islamic Trust (G.I.T.). There a committed Da'wah worker Ahmed Ihwas was the moving spirit behind these courses.

In 1969, the Islamic Missionaries Guild had acquired 8.8 acres of land at No. 1 Mucurapo Road from the Government. Before a deed was issued, some other Muslim organizations with high ranks in the governing party pressed the government to rescind its offer. The Islamic Missionaries Guild had all its machinery in place and was already using the property and the new posturing of the politicians caused everything to grind slowly to a halt, leaving one small building on the site and an irregular presence of African Muslim activists.

In 1979, a number of African brothers and sisters used the site for an Eid prayer. They decided then to request from the IMG the opportunity to use the building on a regular basis. This group eventually became the first official Jamaat al Muslemeen led by Imam Yasin Abu Bakr. The organization developed a small weekend school and proceeded to enhance the surroundings of the building that was being used for prayer.

At about this time, the demise of the Islamic Party allowed a national entity to be formed calling itself Al Muwahideen having the majority of the Islamic Party members in Trinidad.

The year 1982, the Jamaat al Muslemeen, Al Muwahideen led by Bilal Abdullah, and the Trinidad arm of the New York-based Dar-ul-Islam movement led by Abdul Haqq, held a series of meetings and decided to unify their groups. The resulting organization kept the name Jamaat al Muslemeen (JAM).

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.2.

Jam Conflicts with Government

During 1982 and 1983, the Jamaat al Muslemeen (JAM) was engaged in some confrontation with a major local building contractor who used a portion of the land at Mucurapo Road for the storage of material. This, coupled with the bombing of a convention held by the Qadiani "followers" by persons yet to be identified, caused fingers to be pointed at the JAM and the Islamic Trust. The Islamic Trust and the other known Muslim organizations with the singular exception of JAM publicly denied involvement.

Partly as a result of this silence and some other political intrigues, the premises at No. 1 Mucurapo Road were raided by police in August 1983 on the supposed suspicion of arms and ammunition. Nothing of this kind was found. At this point a group of predominantly East Indian Muslims attached themselves to the JAM.

At the end of the year 1984, the Jamaat al Muslemeen embarked on a plan to construct a Masjid, one of the main buildings for which the land originally was required.

The building began apace in December, and in early January 1985 the Port of Spain city corporation filed an injunction within the High Court to prevent further work on the project and to demolish what had already been built. This was another type of harassment by the government agency to deny the Muslim community use of facilities which were granted by the same government.

The writ was ignored and the Imam, Yasin Abu Bakr was sentenced to 21 days imprisonment for contempt of court. One day the police attempted to arrest the leader, he indicated that he had done nothing wrong and would not submit under such circumstances. This action created great controversy and Islam came under discussion in the print media in Trinidad.

Because of the stand taken by the Imam, the Muslims of the country became involved at different levels (...pro and con) and many rallied to the support of the organization. Eventually on the 8th February, 1985 the Imam was arrested through the use of massive police participation and thereby he spent the next three weeks incarcerated.

The arrest did not stop the building of the mosque and many Muslims of the country supported with cash or labour and even with food. In fact, some of them (many being East Indian Muslims) decided to function as part of the JAM. When the Imam was released many

non-Muslims, old and young, visited the masjid compound and some of them after discussing the tenets of Islam.

Later in 1985 another incident put Islam again into the public gaze. On the night of 8th July 1985, three Muslim young men attached to the Jamaat al Muslemeen were arrested by two policemen for loitering. On their way to the police station which was within walking distance, there was an altercation between one of the young man, Abdul Kareem by name, and a police officer. A struggle ensued and eventually Abdul Kareem was stabbed to death by a third person who according to the police was an "unknown assailant".

This caused a natural furore and the state engaged in a whitewashed inquest which exonerated the police from any wrongdoing. Again the posture of the JAM provoked public attention and some public meetings during the following months along with Human Rights lawyer Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj impacted to cause more people to enter the fold of Islam.

The functions of the group are to propagate Islam by example, to resist those ideas which are contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (ASW) and to educate and provide welfare services for those in need. As a result, the Jamaat runs a well-established school from nursery to secondary level and has provided for those in need food, medical services, etc.

The organization is well aware (as others are) of the serious social problems (crime, vagrancy, drug-addiction) faced by the nation. It pays special attention to the problem of drug-addiction and drug-trafficking. This active involvement in fighting the drug menace has been undertaken (according to the Jamaat's leader Imam Abu Bakr) as a result of the failure of the government to deal effectively with the situation.

In a sense the Jamaat has declared war against the drug and the drug traffickers. They believe, to put it simply, that one of the ways to end drug abuse would be to stop the supply to would be users on the one hand and to provide spiritual and moral training for the youth on the other hand.

As a result of their open opposition to cocaine, the social and economic crises which exist within the country and the attraction of the teachings of Islam, this particular organization has attracted many youthful followers who have accepted Islam and are seeking to turn their backs on a life of drug addiction. These young people come mainly from the Port of Spain area and

from schools in Mucurapo, Belmont, St. James and along the East-West Corridor. The Jamaat has designed a programme to help its new members overcome their drug problems.

The activities of the Jamaat has raised the question in the society of the Supremacy of the Qur'an as opposed to the Western custom of the Supremacy of the Constitution of the land. Imam Abu Bakr, the religious leader is quoted as saying that "The Quran gives us the right to bear arms, so when you see a Muslim with a gun, he is not committing any crime".

Another important issue has been highlighted that is, the right of the Muslim women to wear the Khimar (Face veil). This question arose after the arrest of two female members who were then requested to have their photographs taken. They refused to have their picture taken by a male photographer claiming that it was against their religion to be seen by a man without a "Khimar". They requested a female photographer and this request was eventually granted by the court. The actions of the Jamaat reflect the concern of the Muslim community with social problems.

On July 27, 1990, the Jamaat al Muslemeen staged a coup in Trinidad in an attempt to overthrow the government by taking cabinet members and parliamentarians hostage in the parliament building. The JAM also occupied the facilities of the country's only television station taking staff members hostage and burnt down police headquarters in Port of Spain⁴⁸.

These events precipitated looting in Port of Spain, the coup attempt ended on August 1 when the JAM activists released their hostages and were taken into custody. At least 20 persons were killed, including one member of parliament, during the crisis⁴⁹.

Coup leader Yasin Abu Bakr's stepson, Njisane Omowale was killed on August 1, by a police officer, who claimed he was among a group in a house that fired on police. However, Omowale was found without a weapon, and relatives, say that he was gunned down after he was found hiding in a closet. The wife of Yasin Abu Bakr, Anisa was arrested and charged with

⁴⁸ Documents presented to U.S. Congress, 1990-91, p.781.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

shooting at the police officer, and with firearms offenses. Until December 9, she was also under a separate detention order. Later, she was granted bail on December 12 to await trial⁵⁰.

Imam Yasin Abu Bakr feels that it was necessary to fight for the oppressed, the jobless people, victims of the increasing cost of living. Moreover, always viewed as a radical group, the Jamaat al Muslemeen suffered constant victimization. School attended by children, for instance, were subject to occasional police raids and shooting during school hours.

I have met Abdullah Omowale one of the engineers of the coup, during his tour with the Tablighi Jamaat in Islamabad in June 1995. He said that they did not wish to takeover the government by a coup. "The actual plan was to provide other people an opportunity to replace the corrupt government"⁵¹.

Later, all those arrested for involvement in the attempted coup were granted freedom through an amnesty signed by the acting President of Trinidad and Tobago in the heat of the coup.

Many people, even Muslims, disagree with the way the JAM handled their grievances. However, this coup was in the aftermath of discriminatory behaviour of government with the JAM with respect to utilization of land at Mucurapo Road and manhandling of JAM workers, and its leader. The contribution of JAM towards proliferation of Islamic message among the Afro-Caribbeans, is something that is admitted by its friends and critics.

The Islamic Missionaries Guild

The Islamic Missionaries Guild of Trinidad and Tobago was founded in 1960 by the late Dr. Fazlur Rahman Ansari, President of the World Federation of Islamic Missions, during one of his visits to these shores. In outlining his reasons for the formation of the Guild, Dr. Ansari noted the serious lack of missionary activity in the Caribbean area. He reminded his audience of the Quranic injunction "Let there arise from among you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong,"⁵² whose duty is to propagate

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 783.

⁵¹ Interview with Abdullah Omowale (who has migrated to Cuba after the coup). I interviewed him in June 1995 at Islamabad.

⁵² Al Quran: 3:104.

Islam". He said that on the basis of this command he felt that it was "high time" that such a group be established for the propagation of Islam in Trinidad and Tobago and, subsequently, throughout the Caribbean. After a stirring appeal for people to come forward and serve in the field of Dawah, enrolment forms were distributed and several persons responded.

At a special meeting held at Princes Town for would be Islamic workers who had joined the Guild, Dr. Ansari pointed out that the task of propagation was by no means an easy one and he urged members to prepare themselves thoroughly to endure a great deal of hardship and frustration in carrying out the task that lay ahead. He wanted that during the course of propagating Islam hostilities would be encountered, even to the point of physical attack. In such instances he exhorted, "If they slap you kiss their hands - if they kick, you kiss their boots...."⁵³.

The general body of Muslims were urged to support the Guild in whatever way they could to ensure its success, he went on, "Those of you who wield influence should support the Guild with your influence, those of you who have wealth should support the Guild with your wealth....and the Guild should begin its work".

For several months afterwards no follow-up action was taken. Then Haji M. K. Hosein obtained the membership applications from Mr. Rauf Ali and invited all the members to a special meeting to decide the future of the Guild. Everyone was eager to begin working and after several such meetings and the drawing up of a suitable constitution, the Guild began its work.

With permission from the Montrose Jamaat, the Montrose Mosque Hall served as the first Headquarters of the Guild. This remained so until the Guild removed its headquarters to Port-of-Spain. A Board of ten members was appointed to conduct the affairs of the Guild, each Board member holding a special portfolio. The rest of the members attached themselves to any of those they preferred. Regular monthly meetings were held at which reports were given on work accomplished and plans were made for the month ahead. All members were invited to such meetings and were free to participate fully in all activities. No personal aggrandizement was

⁵³ Fazl ur Rahman Ansari, Guidelines For Islamic Propagation, Inaugural Speech at the launching Ceremony, printed by the Islamic Missionaries Guild, Trinidad, n.d. p.11.

offered to any power-seekers as membership to the Guild meant selfless service on the path of Islam. Those who could not cope with such a situation naturally dropped out after a while and sought other ports while the Guild grew stronger and stronger.

Some Achievements of the Guild

Before proceeding to examine the various problems faced by the Guild we shall first take a look at some of its achievements⁵⁴.

Islamic Books and Suppliers: Prior to the Guild, books on Islam were extremely scarce and Trinidad people were seriously uninformed and in many cases misinformed about Islam. Recognizing this problem the Guild immediately began importing Islamic books and supplies on a relatively large scale and selling them at almost cost price. Books imported included the Holy Quran with translations as well as Hadith and several Islamic books in English. These books were quickly snapped up by Muslims as well as non-Muslims who availed themselves of the opportunity of widening their knowledge about Islam. Donations of books were also made to several libraries, schools, groups and individuals. Today, other organizations have also joined hands in this effort.

Radio programme: Muslims have been living here for well over a century and yet there was not even a single Islamic Radio programme for the awareness of the general public on matters pertaining to Islam. Muslims had to contend with an occasional slot on one of the regular 'Indian Programmes' on radio. It is not surprising, therefore, that the impression created in the minds of the public, including some Muslims, was that Islam was an 'Indian Religion'. When the Guild began negotiations for an Islamic Radio Programme, they were told by the authorities that there were already "too many Indian Programmes" on radio and therefore they could not grant another one. Ironically, Brother Yusuf Mitchell, the Guild's chief negotiator for the programme, was far from being an Indian and he was able to reliably inform the station's management that Islam is in fact a universal religion. The Guild therefore succeeded in establishing a regular weekly half-hour programme called 'The Voice of Islam' (now called 'The Islamic Hour'). This programme has been on the air for several years now.

⁵⁴ Information on IMG have been culled out and summarized from the files of the IMG.

Hajj Group: The Guild was the first organization to arrange Hajj groups. Previously, certain individuals had been promoting such trips and were enjoying for themselves, the free tickets offered by the airlines for group travel. The Guild used the free tickets benefit to cover unforeseen group expenses or, where no such expenses occurred, to give a rebate to each pilgrim. Soon another organization set up a competing Hajj Group, and this had the unfortunate consequence of bringing about an unhealthy rivalry among Muslims in one of their most sacred duties.

Islamic Newspaper: Seeing the need for a newspaper to express the Muslim viewpoint, the Guild established a paper called the *Torch of Islam*. This paper has served a useful purpose over the years. However, it had been much more effective if the talents of the various organizations could be harnessed. At the present several pamphlets are being published and circulated mainly to Muslims, but this duplication of effort and expense is not having the desired impact on the community at large. The pooling of resources in this vital area would enable the voice of the Muslims to be clearly heard throughout the island. Unfortunately, *Torch of Islam* has ceased to be published because of financial crisis.

New Muslims: The beauty and simplicity of Islam never fails to attract new adherents to its fold. Through its various programmes the Guild has been able to attract many new Muslims. It was hoped that these new brothers and sisters would be absorbed by the *jamaats* nearest to their homes and given the necessary guidance. This did not materialize, however, and in some cases ethnic polarization has resulted. It is hoped that this undesirable situation would be adjusted through proper Islamic education.

Qualified Islamic Teachers/Lecturers: The Guild has been making efforts to obtain the services of qualified Islamic Teachers and Lecturers so that people could be educated from authentic sources. Three of the teachers were Dr. Fazlur Rahman Ansari (Pakistan), Dr. Osman Abdel Salaam (Egypt) and Dr. S. Hosein Pasha (USA). Others included Shakeer Mohammed (Local), Niamat Ali (Local), Dr. Ahmad Totonji (Saudi Arabia), Dr. Ahmad Sakr (USA), Dr. Jamal Badawi (Canada) and Hisham Badran (Canada). Later, three qualified teachers were attached to the Guild in the persons of Gulshair (Guyana), Faisal Boadi (Ghana) and Munaf Muhamamd (Guyana) who is still working with the IMG.

Youth Camps: Here is another field in which the Guild has set the pace. With the assistance of Hisham Badran, an expert in Youth Camp activities, the Guild organized several youth camps at Chaguaramas and elsewhere, at which hundreds of Muslim youths from both the genders received their basic training in Islam. So successful were these camps that later they have become an integral part of society's activities. Camps are now being held on a regular basis in several jamaats throughout Trinidad along the same lines as those conducted by Mr. Hisham Badran. The programme for these camps include physical exercises, sports, Islamic knowledge classes, the regular performance of salaah, five times daily skits, songs, chants and quiz. In the camps, participants learn to live a life of cooperation with other Muslims. They develop healthy habits and attitudes which are so necessary to enable them to live the lives of true Muslims. The nightly social hours provide the opportunity for creativity and self-expression among the youths. The social hours also serve as a satisfactory alternative to various un-Islamic functions that are in vogue in the society. The continuation of these camps is vitally important for the preservation and propagation of Islam in this part of the world.

Annual Conference: The Annual conference provides Muslim workers of the region, as well as those from outside the region, with the opportunity of sitting together and discussing their problems with a view to finding suitable solutions for them.

Islamic Centre Lands at Mucurapo: Following several years of constant and negotiations with the government of Trinidad and Tobago the Guild was granted a piece of some eight and a half acres of land at No. 1 Mucurapo Road, Port-of-Spain, for the purpose of erecting an Islamic Cultural Centre. Several Muslim countries offered to make generous contributions to ensure that the centre becomes a reality.

Having obtained permission from the government to enter and develop the land the Guild spent thousands of dollars in converting a veritable swamp into prime property in preparation for constructions the much needed centre. The late Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams deputed one of his Cabinet Ministers, A. Thompson, to lay the foundation stone on his behalf.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ IMG's file on "Muslim Unity", p.8.

In the midst of all this a letter was forwarded by the ASJA to the Government objecting to the grant of the land to the Guild and asking the government to "rescind" its decisions to do so. However, the fact remains that the Islamic Centre project was effectively grounded through the reluctance of the government to finalize the official lease.

The Centre would have been a landmark in the city of Port-of-Spain, with minarets visible from the Gulf-of-Paria. The ground plan included a large and beautiful globe-shaped mosque, a spacious auditorium, a research centre, an administrative centre, a hostel for students and visitors, a well-equipped library, a restaurant, a swimming pool, a large car park and beautiful landscaping. All the details of the structure of the Centre are found wrapped up in the files.

Several attempts were made to urge the government to honour its commitment to the Muslim community by officially releasing the land to the Guild but it could not have happened due to disunity among the Muslims. The parcel of land in question was clearly identified on government's official land survey of the area as earmarked for the Islamic Centre, and the Guild's name had appeared on the assessment roll of the Port-of-Spain City Council. For several years the Guild continued to pay Government Rates and Taxes in respect of the said land.⁵⁶

Dr. Ansari's Attempts at Muslim Unity: During his visit to Trinidad in 1964 Dr. Ansari invited the ASJA, TIA and TML to send representatives to a special meeting convened by him to discuss the possibility of effecting unity among the three of them. The CMYO, the IYM of San Juan, and the Guild were also invited as interested parties. Of the three main bodies only the ASJA was represented. Dr. Ansari informed those present that the President General of the TML had sent to say that he could not attend the meeting as he had a previous commitment, while the President General of the TIA had replied that he would not be attending since he was of the opinion that no useful purpose would be served by having such a meeting.

Sensing the futility of the morning's exercise, and as a face-saving device, an ad hoc arrangement was arrived at. The IYM agreed to work in close Cooperation with the CMYO, while the Guild agreed to serve as an "AUTONOMOUS MISSIONARY ARM OF THE ASJA" The word "autonomous" was deliberately included to ensure that the Guild would remain a self-

⁵⁶ My interview with M.K. Hosein on August 05, 1991.

governing body. By giving this undertaking the Guild had not become the property of ASJA as the latter had claimed, nor did it give up its assets to that body. (The same may be said about the IYM's relationship with the CMYO).

After that meeting virtually nothing had changed except that the ASJA started sending two representatives to the meetings of the Guild. Much to the credit of the Guild one of these representatives openly remarked that he was much impressed by the manner in which the Guild conducted its affairs - without any unnecessary bickering that is characteristic of so many organizations, and without any power struggle.

Emergence of The Guild of the Caribbean and South America

Having firmly established itself the Guild saw the opportunity of extending its services to the rest of the Caribbean region. This was in accordance with the expressed wish of Dr. Ansari, founder of the Guild. Accordingly, representatives of the Trinidad Guild met with those of the Guyana Guild, which was also founded by Dr. Ansari, to discuss the possibility of forming a Caribbean Guild. As a result of these discussions a Conference was convened at Port-of-Spain to which representatives from several Caribbean countries were invited. Dr. Abdel Kader, Director of the Islamic Centre in Washington was also invited to participate in this Conference. The President General of the ASJA was invited to chair the conference.

At the eleventh hour the ASJA raised objections to the holding of the Conference and decided to boycott it. Dr. Kader was asked to mediate in the 'dispute' that had arisen but as he attempted to do so he was insulted by an official of ASJA who accused him of being the cause of the dispute. However the Conference proceeded as planned and a unanimous decision was taken to form a Caribbean Guild and to call it "The Islamic Missionaries" Guild of the Caribbean and South America". The Constitution decided upon, and which was condemned by ASJA, was patterned after none other than that of The World Federation of Islamic Missions of which Dr. Ansari himself was President.

After this conference situation for the Guild became difficult as every aspect of the Guild's activities was vehemently opposed. Anti-Guild bulletins were circulated accusing the Guild of breaking away from ASJA and of handing over assets belonging to ASJA to the IMG of the Caribbean and South America. Jamaats were called upon to boycott all activities of the Guild including the Radio Programme, the Bookstore, Classes and Lectures sponsored by the

Guild and The Hajj Group organized by it. Members of the Guild were also banned from participating in any programmes organized by ASJA jamaats. People who had joined the Guild were ostracised by members of their jamaats. Dr. Salaam was called a communist and he was accused of propagating "Nasserism" in Trinidad and Tobago. The Guild was also accused of associating with foreign countries (meaning Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc.) and this was said to be dangerous for Trinidadians.

Since Dawah work is a specialised activity, and not wishing to duplicate the programme of the existing organizations, the Guild applied for registration under the Companies Ordinance. This application was also opposed, but on grounds which were successfully refuted, and the Guild was duly registered.

Kamal Mohammad's Unity Move: Another unity proposal came from Kamaluddin Mohammed who originally called for the dissolution of all existing organizations and the subsequent formation of a single one. After holding preliminary discussions with officials of the various organizations, Kamal summoned a meeting at the Nur-e-Islam Mosque in San Juan, at which he invited all concerned. At that meeting various issues were raised, most of which were unresolved. Some of these issues were as follows:-

1. The status of the Nur-e-Islam Mosque in the context of the proposed unity:

No guarantee could be given that this mosque would participate in the exercise of being handed over to the new body. The St. James Mosque posed a similar problem.

2. The Declaration of Assets: On this issue there was much heated argument during which one official of a major organization made it clear that his organization was not going to declare its assets to anyone. This issue was also left unresolved.

3. Representation on the New Body: One organization expressed great concern over the number of representatives and maintained that their was the largest body and, as such, greater representation and control ought to be given to them. The other representatives rejected this point of view and no decision could be arrived at.

4. Dissolution: No organization could commit itself to dissolution since they would all have to move appropriate resolutions and/or make amendments to their

constitutions before they could even consider such a step. Thus their dissolution could not be guaranteed.

From the number of unresolved issues, and from the amount of mistrust displayed by the various representatives for one another, it was obvious that no one was interested in dissolving their organization. However, a scapegoat had to be found and the Guild provided to be the best prospect, since it had been offering the least resistance throughout the day. A document was hurriedly prepared setting out, among other things, a specified date for the dissolution of the Guild. On being asked to sign this document the Guild's representatives pointed out that they had no mandate to take such a decision but that if the words "in Principle" were added they would sign it, subject to its ratification by the Board of Directors of the Guild. This was agreed to and they signed the document.

When this document was brought before the Board it was rejected on the ground that it was totally one-sided since it did not similarly commit the other organizations to dissolution by a specified date. The Board further observed that the mechanics of unity had not yet been properly worked out and, as such, the dissolution of the Guild would be rather premature. Incensed at what the Board viewed as an attempt to destroy the Guild, it took a decision not to take any further part in any future talks. The fact that the other organizations did not proceed to carry on with the unity talks without the Guild is ample proof of the extent to which they were committed to organisational unity.

In July, 1991, during the 1st Regional Leadership Training Camp held by Da'wah Academy, Islamabad, Pakistan in collaboration with the IMG, efforts were made particularly by Dr. Ali Kettani (Morocco) and Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi (Pakistan) to bring back IMG and ASJA nearer to each other. It became possible due to flexible attitude of Dr. Mansoor Ibrahim, the President General of ASJA that two organizations signed an agreement on August 1, 1991. Maulana Siddiq Nasir visited the Islamic Centre, Kelly Village Caroni (The venue of the Camp) and Dr. Mansoor Ibrahim was invited as the Chief Guest of the concluding ceremony of the above mentioned Camp. People present at the gathering told the writer that it was the first occasion in the history of Trinidad that ASJA's top leadership has attended any IMG function. The IMG has received certain set backs in the past decade. Its monthly *Torch of Islam* is no more being published and circulated. Its primary school at the Islamic Centre has been closed.

Its annual convention which was its regular feature for thirty years has not been held after 1991. Its two very active members, M.K. Hossein (Ex-Executive Director) and Ayub Muhammad (Ex-President) are no more associated with IMG.

Its Headquarter has been shifted from Port-of-Spain to the Islamic Centre. IMG does not have funds to maintain the building of Islamic Centre.⁵⁷ The building in February 1995, needed indispensable renovations for which appeal for funds was made to IIFSO.

So far as I understand, the responsibility of present down fall of the IMG goes to its directors of early 1990s. They made one person for vehicle all the activities. This person M.K. Hossein was the all rounder of IMG. He was its Executive Director, its Office Secretary, its Manager Finance, its Co-ordinator, its clerk and driver. All other directors seemed withdrawn and were seen only on special occasions and ceremonies. Consequently, no alternate leadership was prepared. When, Br. M.K. Hossein, on the pretext of difference of opinion withdrew himself from the IMG and devoted himself exclusively to the Caribbean Islamic Secretariat (CIS), the IMG received a serious set back.

Another reason for weakening of IMG is its continued dependence on the foreign donations. Br. Masahood Aziz, the Secretary General of IMG believed that "the donations from abroad used to come through Br. M.K. Hossein. Since he is no more with IMG, so we face a grave financial situation".⁵⁸

Br. Mirza Ali Mohammad, one of the Co-ordinators of former AICCLA commented "the IMG has played its requisite role in the history of the Caribbean Muslims. It was the turning point when it expanded its work to other territories of the Caribbean. But, now, its role is over. Other Islamic Organizations have emerged which will replace IMG. These new organizations (like IDM and UWIS) are more dynamic and movement oriented than the IMG⁵⁹".

⁵⁷ My interview with Masahood Aziz on February 1, 1995 at the Islamic Centre, Caroni, Trinidad. Masahood Aziz is presently the Secretary General of the IMG.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ My interview with Mirza Ali Mohammad on February 5, 1995.

However, it was IMG which expanded its Dawah activities out of the boundaries of Trinidad and gave Islam an international colour which otherwise was considered as an Indian religion by many.

Therefore, IMG must be particularly commended for its contribution in presenting the universal character of the brotherhood of Islam.

Muslim Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited

The Muslim Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited of Trinidad and Tobago (M.C.U.) achieved Legal status as a Credit Union from the Ministry of Social Security and Co-operatives on 18 November, 1983. However, as an idea, it had been in existence for an even longer period.

In the decade of seventies, Muslims, particularly the young in Trinidad, were becoming part of the Islamic resurgence that was taking place in the world. At an informal lecture and meeting at the Curepe Masjid in 1974, an idea of having an Islamic Bank in Trinidad emerged. Present at that meeting was the prominent Islamic Missionary, Syed Hussain Pasha. The meeting strongly felt the need of evolving an interest-free economic system. Muslims are prohibited from taking or giving of Interest by Allah⁶¹. The Prophet Muhammad (ASW) also spoke against interest or Riba: "Allah had cursed the receiver, the giver of interest and also the witness and scribe of the interest transaction, they are alike".

After that meeting, investigations were made regarding the setting up of an Islamic Bank in Trinidad. It was found to be unfeasible because the Banking Act of Trinidad and Tobago did not provide for it. The idea was thus dropped, but not indefinitely. In 1980, an Islamic Study Group in the Curepe area set up a "cooperative loan project" among themselves. It finally grew up as the 'Crescent Co-operative Project' or C.C.P. It was informal and unregistered. It was a financial institution devised for using the excess money of well-to-do Muslims to help out other Muslims who needed immediate cash to meet unexpected expenses or unanticipated decline in their incomes. In its function the project operates without interest: the lender gives a loan to the C.C.P. without charging interest while the qualified borrower gets a loan without paying interest.

⁶¹ Al Quran, 2:275.

The C.C.P. headed by study Group leader, Imtiaz Ali Bakr, was the forerunner of the present M.C.U. - Muslim Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited. The members of C.C.P. realized that a financial institution running zero rate of interest for the welfare of Muslims could be practical⁶¹. A committee headed by Imtiaz Ali Bakr, leader of the group, made a proposal for the setting up of a Muslim Credit Union of Trinidad and Tobago to officials of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Co-operatives in 1982. They spoke to Co-operative Officer, Miss Lenore Edwards who gave positive response, though, for her it was a novelty to hear about a credit union running at zero rate of interest. However, she did most of the groundwork for the implementation of the Muslim Credit Union.

Mr. Ivan Mahabirsingh, Deputy Commissioner for Co-operatives was keen to know how the proposed Credit Union could run without interest and pay itself. He proposed a one percent interest rate. The Committee for the proposed Muslim Credit union responded with the idea of payment of Management Dues. This did not satisfy the cooperative authorities. This could be understood because no where in the west among non-Muslims did exist any financial institution being operated at no rate of interest. The idea was to say the least unrealistic for non-Muslim and many Muslims alike.

Mr. Mahabirsingh's main concern was that without income from interest how were the expenses going to be taken care off. In other words, "from where was the guaranteed income going to be derived", he questioned. The committee replied that it was going to be met from business ventures which they had already set up⁶².

In the meantime two seminars were held by the Interim Committee of the Proposed Muslim Credit Union at T.M.L Centre, St. Joseph. The seminars were held to educate Muslims on the whole idea "Riba" and the proposed alternative, that is, the Muslim Credit Union. At the second seminar held in October, 1982, the Interim Committee was dissolved and a new Working Committee was elected. The Committee was given a mandate to:

⁶¹ Imtiaz Ali, Economic Imperatives of Islamic Da'wah, (Trinidad: MCU office, 11 Eastern Main Road, Curepe, 1989), p.10.

⁶² Ibid., p. 13.

- i. Draft the Bye-Laws of the Muslim Credit Union in accordance with the Islamic Shari'ah;
- ii. Register the Muslim Credit union;
- iii. Carry out feasibility studies on means of recovering operating expenses;
- iv. Keep the Muslim Community abreast of developments;
- v. Call the First Annual General Meeting⁶³.

The Working Committee held its first meeting at the Trinidad Muslim League's Quaid-e-Azam Memorial Masjid at St. Joseph on 8th November, 1982. At that meeting an internal election was held. Imtiaz Ali was elected Chairman, Omar K. Gharib as Treasurer and Shariati Ali Muhammad as Secretary.

It was the Working Committee of the Proposed Muslim Credit Union that worked ardently to see a dream come true. A handbook entitled "Riba (usury on Interest): Its condemnation By the Shariah And A Proposed Alternative" was prepared by Imtiaz Ali and published by the Committee. An office was rented at the corner of Sellier Street and Riverside Road, Curepe. Bye-Laws were drafted and an education programme was ensured on the Credit Union. At the office the committee sold a number of items such as cassettes, cookies, soft drinks, and fruits, Islamic books and confectionery. Other economic ventures were undertaken to raise funds such as vermicellia sales and the Jolly Roger Cruise. One person was initially employed to run the operations at the office. This was increased to two as sales and business increased.

In the interim period the battle for registration as a Credit Union was going on at the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Co-operatives. Mr. Mahabirsingh requested a report of the business ventures conducted so far, as well as a projection of expected income and expenditure for the next two years. The organizers with his requests, filled out application for registration and waited as all was in the hands of the Co-operative Department at this time.

As the committee waited the business at the office grew. Monies for sales were collected since the committee was informed that it was permissible to do albeit not registered yet.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

Subsequent to this a full time manager was employed in the person of Alimuddin Ali, a graduate from the University of the West Indies.

As was requested, Mr. Mahabirsingh was presented with a report of the Committee's business. The report showed that from July to October, 1983 figures for sale stood at \$180,000.00 (unaudited). Mr. Mahabirsingh was very impressed with the feasibility and so on 18 November, 1983, the Muslim Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited (M.C.U.) was registered under the Co-operative Act of Trinidad and Tobago (1971) at offices located at the corner of Riverside Road and Sellier Street.

The General objectives of the M.C.U. as Stated in its Bye-Laws are as follows:

- a. To promote the economic welfare of its members;
- b. To encourage the spirit and practice of thrift, self-help and co-operation among members and to provide the development of co-operative ideas;
- c. To do all such lawful things incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objectives and the exercise of the power of the society⁶⁴.

The M.C.U. is not affiliated to any Muslim Organization and as such is open for membership to all Muslims of good character in Trinidad and Tobago.

STRUCTURE OF THE M.C.U.

Board of Directors

Elected by and from the members, it is responsible for the operations and policies of the society.

Supervisory Committee

Elected by and from the members, it keeps an eye on the operations of the society on behalf of the members.

Credit Committee

Elected by and from the members, it processes in the strictest confidence all the loan applications.

⁶⁴ Flyer of M.C.U. (Trinidad: 11 Eastern Main Road, Curepe).

Education Committee

Appointed by the Board of Directors, it is in charge of publicity and education.

Investment Committee

Appointed by the Board of Directors, it is responsible for the business aspect of the society⁶⁵.

Services and Achievement of M.C.U.

1. Purchase of Shares and Saving Account;
2. Loans:
 - (i) Loans secured by shares;
 - (ii) Character loans;
 - (iii) Guaranteed loans;
3. Two Consumer outlets. First one opened since 1983 at Curepe and the other at Gasparillo, opened in 1985. The M.C.U. General office at the Corner of Riverside Road and Sellier Street was moved to a new location at Sellier Street. The Consumer outlet at Gasparillo also houses a branch of M.C.U.
4. Printing: The M.C.U. bought its own Printer in 1984.
5. Marketing: M.C.U. serves as an Agent for many business lines. Example: It is sole Agent for Amins Shoe Factory.
6. Zakaah: M.C.U. has begun to collect and distribute Zakaah.
7. Newsletter: M.C.U. prints its own Newsletter, "Muslim Co-op News".
8. Seminars and Meetings: M.C.U. has organized and hosted numerous meetings and lectures particularly among the Muslim community in an effort to educate people on the concept of M.C.U. and Islamic Economic System. M.C.U. hosted an international conference on "Economic Systems of Islam" during December 1985. That conference attracted a number of experts on Islamic Economics.
9. Employment: M.C.U. has created employment for fifteen people.

Other Benefits

1. M.C.U. has created an avenue whereby Muslims can transact their financial business within the tenets of their faith. That is, the M.C.U. operates on the same

⁶⁵ Ibid.

basis as all credit unions except that there is no interest charged in lending or in depositing.

2. All areas of Islamic Economics can be included in the operating policy including partnership investments.
3. Profits are not subject to taxation and members' deposits are, to the extent of \$2,500 "increase" in deposits for a year, tax deductible.
4. Because of the 'Bond of Association" in Credit Unions, a credit union can serve as a unifying factor for Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago.
5. The M.C.U. can serve as an operating model for establishing credit unions for Muslims and non-Muslims in other societies.

Future Plans and Projections

1. To pursue the establishment of services for assisting the Muslim Community in implementation of the Islamic Laws of Inheritance;
2. To initiate the mechanism whereby the system of Zakaah can be established in a well co-ordinated manner.
3. To investigate the possibility of developing a Housing Policy to cater to the needs of its members.
4. To research areas of Insurance, Banking and Financial Planning from the point of view of the Shari'ah.
5. To increase membership to 20,000 that is, 20 percent of the Muslim population.
6. To establish contact with other Muslim Co-operatives throughout the world.
7. To cater for the social and economic (welfare) needs of the Muslims.

These plans are bold and may appear imaginative but so was the idea of a credit union operating at "zero rate" of interest. The general membership and the Board of Directors of M.C.U. imbued with the establishment of a proper Islamic economic system within a capitalist system to cater for the needs of Muslims as ordained in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. Looking at its growth over its first five years of existence one gets the impression that M.C.U. will continue to be successful. This does not mean that M.C.U. is without problems. Many Muslims are there but ignorance about the Economic system of Islam with special reference to Riba is very significant. Some who are aware of it are reluctant to join M.C.U. for one reason or

another. M.C.U. does not offer all banking facilities for example, overdraft, chequing system, etc; So many Muslims find it disadvantageous to their financial functions.

One thing is certain. M.C.U. is spearheaded by a group of young people imbued with religious fervour with a refreshing and innovative approach to economic and social responsibilities.

The Union has established a Masjid Revolving Fund as well. Substantiated by donations from individuals, jamaats, companies and organizations, the fund is essentially for renovating or making extension in the mosques. In the Union, a dependable method exists whereby Zakaah is collected and distributed to needy Muslims. Consultation on calculating Zakaah, the drawing up of forms as well as the distribution of inheritance in accordance with the Shariah principles is available⁶⁶.

It is heartening to note that in February 1988, the Muslim Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited was registered in Guyana and that a committee is presently working on the establishment of a co-operative in Barbados.

ISLAMIC FUNERAL SERVICES TRUST (I.F.S.T.)

This is another service oriented organization. It was born out of religious and economic necessity that is to bury the dead with haste and to reduce the burial cost for Muslims. The establishment of this organization became necessary when the Funeral agencies announced that they would not be working on weekends and public holidays and the boroughs of Trinidad and Tobago announced that they had decided not to pay grave diggers on weekends and public holidays. As a result of these announcements, Shaikh Ibrahim Khan of the Carapichima Jammah initiated discussions and the I.F.S.T. was registered on July 14th, 1984. It is a non-profit organization providing a valuable service for the Muslim community according to Islamic guidelines. The organization is also determined to work for the advancement of Islamic knowledge especially as regards the preparations for the burial of the dead and matters thereof. It seeks to support the poor and needy families at their hour of bereavement. The cost of rental

⁶⁶ Mansoor Ibrahim, "Islam in Trinidad and Tobago" in Muslims in American Continent, edited by M.A. Kettani and A.M. M'Bow, (Paris: Hariri Cultural Foundation), underpress, pp. 37-38.

of the hearse and provision of a burial tray is about three hundred dollars in comparison with other funeral agencies where the cost exceeds a thousand dollars. The organization is different in that the person in need of the hearse has to provide their own driver. The Muslim community has benefitted from this organization but there is a lot of scope for expansion and improvement.

THE ISLAMIC HOME FOR CHILDREN

This Home which currently provides shelter and security for 23 children, was founded in 1989 by Maulana Shafayat Mohammed and began with six children, three girls and three boys. Originally, plans for this two storey structure with a temple shaped building at its side (now used as a mosque) were originally intended for a sports and service league but in 1990, "The Islamic Home for Children" was established to provide protection for abused and homeless children.

Children in this Home are the products of separated or divorced parents who are financially unable to cater to their children's needs. Some of these children who were abandoned arrived with neither birth nor vaccination certificates and never attended school before. Others still are victims of sexual abuse or drug-addicted parents. The home therefore cannot be called an orphanage since roughly 90% of the children have either one if not both parents alive.

Before children could gain entry into the home, they have to be selected by a Committee which investigates the children's circumstances to decide if they qualify for entry. The children are then adopted through the courts in the hope that by the age of sixteen, they will be reunited with their family or adopted by another family.

42% of these children are Muslim, 26% Hindu and 31% are Christian although the administration and thus religious instruction is essentially Islamic⁶⁵. The smaller children attend a Kindergarten, the Hindus attend a Hindu school in the vicinity whilst the Muslim children attend a Muslim school in another town. Although some of the children arrived to the Home without previous education, their school reports bear testimony to the extra lessons that the Home provides.

⁶⁵ Mansoor Ibrahim, p. 47

A small garden where tomatoes, hot and sweet peppers are grown is one of the projects the children tackle in their spare time and a set of swings, see-saws and slides which form a play-ground donated by a private company, lends the opportunity for recreation.

Committee in charge of admission, religion, physical maintenance, planning, personnel and friends of the home, public relations, education and health all function coherently. A house mother and house father, a couple with three children are representative of parents since they reside with their offspring on these facilities permanently. Two maids clean, mend, sew, iron and launder whilst another assists in the evening especially the younger children. A guard, an administrator, dietician and social workers all form part of this working group.

Expenses of the home run into areas such as food, clothing, medicines, health care and school fees, and are met by donations and basically two fund raising activities, an annual dinner and a fair. Individuals also donate their services, a dentist, a doctor, religious people, hairdressers and teachers offer specialized assistance. It is noteworthy that during the month of Ramadan, overwhelming donations from the Muslim community bring prosperity for the Home. The Islamic Home for Children hoped to be incorporated by February of 1994. Later it could not be learnt about progress in this regard.

The Islamic Home for Aged, Poor and Orphans

Located on Hindustan Road in New Grant, this home, which currently houses 25 people has been in existence for many years although presently mainly elderly folk reside here. Mr. Harold Ojir manages the establishment where all residents operate on a "Self-help" basis. The home is ideally situated on grounds where fresh air and exercise is within easy grasp of the elderly. Mr. Ojir also runs a medical facility and mortuary for charity purpose.

Federations of Islamic Organizations

i) Muslim Co-Ordinating Council (MCC)

Unity among the older Muslim organizations in Trinidad had been considered impossible and any attempt in this direction was usually unsuccessful. In the past the Muslims were too caught up with blindly following what their leaders said or did, and not so much with what the Qur'an and Sunnah spoke about. Too much blame cannot be placed on the Muslim masses, simply because they were uneducated and therefore gullible. They were often taken in by what

a foreign missionary or learned man dictated as Islamic (whether so or not). They simply followed what was familiar to them, to their traditions and customs.

In 1957, Kamaludin Mohammad attempted to unify Muslim organizations. He called the Trinidad Muslim League, the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association and the Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association together, but talks fell through due to differences and hostility. In 1961, Kamaludin Mohammad tried again with the TIA, TML and the Islamic Missionaries Guild. This again was unsuccessful.⁶⁶

In 1980 after several meetings were held between the Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association, the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association and the Trinidad Muslim League, they formed the Muslim Co-ordinating Council. The study of files on Muslim unity reveals that the nucleus of the co-ordinating Council emerged as far back as 24th October, 1971 when discussions were held between the then President General of A.S.J.A. - Haj Shaffick Rahman and the President General of T.I.A. N.M. Ghany on Muslim unity. It eventually evolved into what it is today, that is a committee consisting of the three incorporated bodies of Trinidad and Tobago - A.S.J.A., T.I.A. and T.M.L. Originally they operated as a Joint Committee but in 1985 they adopted the name "Muslim Co-ordinating Council". It will hopefully play an important role in the life of the Muslims in the country, for it is founded on the principle of unity as propounded by the Qur'an.

The reasons why this greater degree of co-ordination has occurred is due to the fact that all the three groups are sunnis, and that all the three organisations are incorporated by an Act of Parliament and with regard to the T.M.L., the removal of the Ahmadis label in 1975 has ended the hostility between T.M.L. and the A.S.J.A.

The main objective of the Co-ordinating Council is to deal with matters affecting Muslims. The organisations have differences but they co-operate to bring about general changes for the entire community. All three organisations run primary schools and at present they are working together to develop a common religious education syllabus for their schools. This Council also works together to determine the date for Eid ul Fitr.

⁶⁶. Amina Baksh, An Examination of Muslim Organizations in Present-day Trinidad, Caribbean Studies Thesis, University of the West Indies 1973, p.42.

At present, they are working to have the word "Dowry" which is printed on the Muslim Marriage Register changed to "Mahr" (Nuptial gift) and "How Payable" retained. This recommendation has been sent to the Registrar at the Red House since early 1989 with their reasons. The word dowry is the property which the wife brings to her husband. In Islam - Mahr is the gift which the groom gives to the bride.

All three organizations are optimistic about their future and have expectations of bringing about greater achievements for the Muslim community of this country.

The MCC is more of a federation or consultative body under the motto of "Co-operate With One Another in Good Deeds and Virtue."⁶⁷

ii) The United Islamic Organization (UIO)

The United Islamic Organization was inaugurated on 25th March, 1990. This venture was born during the Rabita Conference in 1989. The Conference dealt with the subject of unity of Muslims and it followed that the question of Muslim unity in Trinidad was brought to the table. Dr. Abdullah Omer Naseef, Secretary General of Rabita, approached all the brothers and proposed the unifying of Muslim organizations in Trinidad.

Brothers like M. K. Hosein, Zabar Baksh and Yusuf Mitchell held a series of meetings with Muslim organizations. The result was the UIO. It was first attempted for the Muslim organizations to join the Muslim Co-ordinating Council, but the organizations did not agree with the clauses for membership into the MCC. They decided to form their own organization, the UIO. The member organizations are as follows:

Majlis al-Ulama

University of West Indies Islamic Society (UWIIS)

Islamic Trust (I.T.)

North Eastern Muslim Youths (NEMY)

Islamic Funeral Services Trust (IFST)

Iqra Productions Limited

Darul Uloom Institute

Islamic Dawah Movement (IDM)

⁶⁷ Al-Quran, 5:2.

Muslim Credit Union (MCU)

Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG)

Jamaat-Al-Muslimeen (JAM) - Membership suspended.

Abdool Aziz Trust (withdrew from UIO in late 1990).

Muslim Youth Brigade (MYB).

The aims and objectives of the UIO are to:

1. Use the Qur'an and Sunnah as guidance for all matters in accordance with the doctrines of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah; the mainstream of majority of Muslims who have continuously followed the Quran and Sunnah as was understood and practiced by the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (ASW).
2. Promote and facilitate co-operation among Muslim organizations in Trinidad and Tobago by providing a forum for exchange of information, sharing experiences and initiating dialogue for the advancement of all.
3. Actively promote and implement unity among Muslims by co-operation, consultation and co-ordination.
4. Promote the passage of legislation favourable to Islam, defend Muslims against adverse legislation and public policies and as far as possible speak with one voice on issues that affect the Muslim community.
5. Advise the Government on matters affecting the Muslim community and the country as a whole.
6. Be a link in establishing contact and co-operation with national, regional and International bodies.
7. Be a medium for developing and supporting Islamic institutions.
8. Do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of its aims and objectives.⁶⁸

This organization was created to fill a crucial need as it was recognised that a unified approach was synonymous with service to Muslims and in fact the wider community. The main

⁶⁸ Memorandum of Understanding of the United Islamic Organizations of Trinidad and Tobago, 6 March, 1990.

idea was that in delivering the message of Islam, all Muslim bodies can function jointly in their activities within a trusting environment.

The United Islamic Organizations (U.I.O) also views itself as a link between the Muslims and national and international bodies and feels strongly about showing non-Muslims true Islam. With an organizational structure of a General Assembly, an Administrative committee along with Working committees, the membership is granted to Muslim organisations which follow the "Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaa'ah" but not those whose activities are confined to specific racial or sectarian interests. Observer status is welcomed and granted with participation in the UIO's activities but not voting rights.

Quite recently, the UIO and the MCC began interacting and in near future integration is visible. Trinidadian Muslims are realizing that they are working within organizations for the sake of Allah and previous "power struggles" where organizations formerly "competed" are almost non-existent⁶⁹.

The multifarious Islamic organizations are not the bringers of dissension since all Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago try to coordinate towards common goal.

It is true that more organizations are formed everyday, yet this is a good sign since Muslims are becoming aware of their duty to protect, promote and propagate Islam and surely forming an organization makes such achievements more feasible.

SMALLER GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

There are some smaller groups and organizations. Their scope and ambit of activities is not so larger. Among them are:

- i) Muslim Youth Brigade (MYB)
- ii) North Eastern Muslim Youth (NEMY)
- iii) Majlis-al Ulama
- iv) Jamaat-al-Muttaqeen

Information on these organizations is scanty. However, whatever could be obtained is provided as following:

⁶⁹ Mansoor Ibrahim, "Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago", p. 50.

i) Muslim Youth Brigade (MYB)

The Muslim Youth Brigade (MYB) was founded in 1983 by Mirza Ali Muhammad, Idris Mohammad and Fareed Kismat Ali. The MYB has a council which plans and organizes the programmes for the organization. The Council is made up of seven members: Kameel Ali; Idris Mohammad, Abdul Rahman, Farouk Khan, Nawaz Gaffar, Farz Khan, Ayoub Khan, and Rahamut Peters. This Organization is the brainchild of Dawood Abdul Haqq, the then Amir of the Islamic Trust. The Muslim Youth Brigade has three units: Central, South and East each unit having twenty members.⁷⁰

The objectives of the MYB are to foster deeper and greater love and brotherhood; develop Islamic morals and leadership qualities among the Muslim Youth. The MYB operates as a scout group. It teaches the Muslim youths to follow authority, discipline and learn organizational skills.⁷¹ The activities of the MYB include an annual camp, held at various sites throughout Trinidad. The admission age is ten to twenty-five years. Other activities carried out in the camp include first aid, scouting skills, Islamic Studies, sports days, prize distribution and hikes. The membership is only for boys but future plans include involvement of the entire family⁷².

The MYB joined the United Islamic Organization (UIO) for various reasons among which are to become more recognised and to popularize the MYB.⁷³ The Organization sees this as an opportunity to integrate the youths of different organisations, therefore promoting unity among them.

The Muslim Youth Brigade's activities aim at developing the youths to be all round individuals, since Muslims are supposed to be sufficient in all fields of life. The qualification for membership in the MYB are Muslims ten to twenty five years of age. The MYB has in its

⁷⁰ Interview with Mirza Ali Mohammed on February 5, 1995.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ My interview with Idris Muhammad (Amir MYB), Cunupia, Trinidad, 2 February 1991.

fold the youth from East Indian and Afro-Trinidadian stock. Usually this organization is found working in collaboration with Islamic Da'wah Movement (I.D.M.).

ii) North Eastern Muslim Youth (NEMY)

The North Eastern Muslim Youth (NEMY) is a Muslim group registered under the Company Act, which centers its activities around the North Eastern part of Trinidad, from Arima to Toco. This is so because its founding members: Idris Muhammad; Rayasat Ali; Qasim Mohammad; Zamina Mohammad; Adi Abdullah; Alyasa Abdullah; and Farouk Ali all live in that part of Trinidad⁷⁴. It is convenient for them to work together and have better co-ordination.

The membership is open to any Muslim in North East Trinidad. The group is headed by a Board of Trustees which caters for the Muslim's needs in that locality. The group activities involve: camping during the holidays, educational programs and social and charitable outreach programmes. NEMY has recently bought a piece of land at Toco for use as a camping site.⁷⁵

NEMY also involves itself in Dawah activities in the North East region and is funded by the members themselves.

iii) Majlis al-Ulama

The Majlis Al-Ulama is a body of Islamic scholars (qualified at various Islamic institutions) based in Trinidad. These scholars include Mufti Shabil Ali, Imtiaz Ali Bakr, and Sheik Fazeel Mohamed. This organization does not have rigid meeting schedule, but was formed so that these scholars can feel some form of togetherness and consensus on certain issues. In Trinidad with such a small Muslim community, decisions such as the date for Eid-ul-Fitr or the start of Ramadan should be uniform. Very often the Muslim community is divided over such issues. The meeting of these scholars can promote unity among the Muslims; when the leaders of the different organisations are in consensus it follows that the members would be in agreement. These scholars also discourse on various activities carried out in the country. Its functions and scope has become more limited with the death of Mufti Shabil Ali, who was regarded as the moving spirit behind this body.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ My interview with Dr. Riza Mohammad on February 4, 1995.

iv) Jama'at Muttaqeen

This group has been founded by Manwar Aziz Ali at 1-Calcutta Road, Trinidad. Previously Manwar Aziz Ali was an active worker of the Islamic Missionaries Guild (I.M.G.) but later lost enthusiasm and zeal. He has also built 'Masjid al Muttaqeen' to which a small 'maktab' is attached. About 30 Muslim children attend this maktab and the Quranic lectures are delivered mostly by Manwar Aziz himself or his daughters.

I had visited this set up on 29th January 1995 and had a frank exchange of views with the founder of Jamaat especially on adopting name as Jamaat al Muttaqeen by one self. I had found that the community around him had a profound regard for his hard work and seemed eager to contribute generously for the masjid and maktab.

Older Organizations

TACKVEEYATUL ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION (TIA)

The Tackveeyatul Islamic Association⁷⁶ (TIA) was the first recognized and incorporated Muslim organization in Trinidad (1931). After the break with the Sunni fraction (later called ASJA) in the early 1930s, the TIA made Moulvi Ameer Ali its life President.

In 1940 the Tablighul-Islam Association was founded by Moulvi Nazeer Ahmad Simab, who hailed from India. He was a progressive man in many ways, in that, for example, he established the first Arabic, English, and Urdu classes in Trinidad, by his policy of propagating Islam through education. He also established the first Muslim elementary school in Trinidad, in 1942 at El Socorro. In 1948 this was the first non-Christian Government assisted school to be inaugurated. Moulvi Simab started the struggle which ended in 1949, with the Government recognizing the Muslim community as a sector responsible enough for the education of the society and deserving of ecclesiastical grants⁷⁷.

The significance of the Tablighul-Islam Association (TIA) to the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association is that, after negotiations between the two organizations, the Tablighul-Islam Association was absorbed by the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association. However, this merging

⁷⁶ The correct name should be "Taqwiatul Islam Association".

⁷⁷ A. W. Hamid, "Nazir Ahmad Simab. The Muslim Standard, (Trinidad, December, 1975), pp. 10-11.

of the two TIA's did not last long. It lasted only one year. There was said to be a power struggle and the matter was unable to be resolved amicably by the members. The matter went to court to determine which group owned the original assets.

Another point of view is that during the 1940s Moulvi Ameer Ali's attraction began to decrease as the Moulvi Simab faction became aware of the Ahmadiyyah element. Therefore in 1947, Ameer Ali was voted as President for life. His followers went to court to determine the legality of this action, considering he was voted in as life President.⁷⁸

Moulvi Simab's supporters had got numerical majority slowly and gradually over Ameer Ali's supporters. Ameer Ali after being disenchanted from the TIA founded the Trinidad Muslim League (T.M.L.) in 1947.

The T.I.A., once a very active body now remains largely a hollow shell. Its activity has been reduced to administration of five Muslim government - assisted primary schools, one of which was the first non-Christian denominational to be set up in the Caribbean. The present leadership of the T.I.A. is alienated from the community and personify in some cases many of the major problems facing the community, problems of racism, immorality, drunkenness and in general an inadequate or indifferent attitude to the requirements of Islam⁷⁹.

The Trinidad Muslim League Inc. (TML)

The Trinidad Muslim League was founded on 15th August, 1947. Since Pakistan movement was afoot at the same time by the Muslim League under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, so the TML took its name from this political party.⁸⁰ The founders of the TML were Moulvi Ameer Ali, Mohammad Hakeem Khan and Mohammad Rafeek. The TML was incorporated in 1950 by an act of Parliament. When a religious body represents a school of thought, it must pass through Parliament to be enacted. The ASJA took objection claiming that the TML's members were Ahmadis and since the ASJA's were followers of Hanafi school, the TML could not represent that particular school of thought. The TML, then

⁷⁸ Farouk Khan, Islam as a Social Force in the Caribbean, p.13.

⁷⁹ Abdul Wahid Hamid, Muslims in the West Indies p. 26.

⁸⁰ My interview with Nazeer Mohammad, Secretary General TML on February 4, 1995.

took the stand that they were "non-conformist" body which meant that they do not conform to anyone particular school of thought and are thus considered Ghair Muqallad.⁸¹

It has been alluded to in the chapter on early Da'wah work, that in 1921 Moulvi Fazal Karim Khan Durrani came to Trinidad as a missionary. During his stay here, he inspired a young man, Ameer Ali of Siparia to go to Lahore to study at the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman-e-Ishaat-e-Islam.⁸² When Ameer Ali returned to Trinidad, he was subsequently recognized as "Qadiani" or "Ahmadi". Ameer Ali expressed his deviant views at every forum and created schism in the ranks of the Muslims. He thrust himself into the Takviatul Islamic Association (TIA) the then only Muslim's organization in Trinidad. After the break with the Sunni group (later called ASJA) in the early 1930's, the TIA made Moulvi Ameer Ali its life President.⁸³ In 1947, Moulvi Nazeer Ahmad Simab's fraction gained more support in TIA and voted out Moulvi Ameer Ali as President for life. Moulvi Ameer Ali was badly discouraged by this decision by the majority. He parted ways with the TIA and launched the Trinidad Muslim League.⁸⁴ Study of the TML's documents leave no doubt that Moulvi Ameer Ali was greatly influenced by Ahmadiyyah teachings. The Souvenir Brochure which was published on the 25th anniversary of the Trinidad Muslim League, Inc. carries a message written and sent by "Hazrat Amir Maulana Sadruddin Sahib, spiritual Head of the Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam of Lahore, West Pakistan", in which he has written:

Besides, I avail myself of this opportunity to confess that the Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Lahore believes firmly that the Holy Prophet (May God bless him) is the last of the prophet. The prophet of Islam himself made this doctrine clear by say - "Ana Khatam un Nabbiyin also "La Nabi ya badi". There shall be no Prophet after me. Accordingly no prophet has appeared during the last fourteen centuries. On the other hand every century has witnessed the appearance of a

⁸¹ R.J. Smith, P. 172.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Farook Khan, "Islam as a Social Force in the Caribbean", p.12.

⁸⁴ Mazac A. Shaama, "The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Trinidad Muslim League Inc. Ahmadiyya Anjuman-e-Ishaat-i-Islam", article published in the Souvenir Brochure, 25th Anniversary of the Trinidad Muslim League, Inc. 1947-1972, p.27.

Mujaddid and that has been prophesied by the Prophet of Islam himself. This is being achieved by the appearance of Mujaddids. Our century has witnessed the truth of the Holy Prophet's prophesy in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim to the effect that he has been the Mujaddid of the times.⁸⁵

The brochure referred to above carried the name of TML with Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam on ten different places. This affiliation with the foreign organization was made open in 1967 which stirred up a great deal of conflict within the organization, for fear they would lose their autonomy after having built up the TML. They were afraid that associating with the Ahmadiyyah would be paradoxical to their policy of Ghair Muqallad.⁸⁶

It is surprising to note that this organization had been assertive in declaring itself 'non-conformist' but one many ask where had its 'non-conformism' gone when it decided affiliation with the Ahmadiyyah.

The impact of TML and Ahmadiyyah was not contained within Trinidad but it was exported to other neighbouring territories of the Caribbean, notably Guyana and Suriname.

The TML's resource persons were sent to conduct series of lectures among the Muslims in Central America.⁸⁷ Dr. Isaac Jamaludin of Islamic Association was supporting Ahmadiyya activities in Suriname. He, later, became supporter of the Islamic Missionaries Guild (I.M.G.). M.B. Yasin was President of Guyana Ahmadiyyah Anjuman.

The publication of the monthly Al Azan for many years and later the TML's "Bulletin" for some time propagated the message of the Ahmadiyyah-associated TML.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Souvenir Brochure published on 25th Anniversary of the TML, Inc. Ahmadiya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, 1947-1972, p.9.

⁸⁶ Amina Baksh, An Examination of Muslim Organizations in Present-day Trinidad, Caribbean Studies Thesis, University of the West Indies, 1973, p.34.

⁸⁷ Souvenir Brochure, Op. Cit. p.27.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

During 1947-1972, one of the important activities of the TML was to inculcate its ideology to its membership and other general Muslims. According to an article by Mr. Shaama, published in the Souvenir Bulletin, a considerable number of scholars was invited from 1947 to 1972 from abroad to "disseminate religious knowledge". Among them were; Maulana Abdul Haque Vidyarthi, Moulvi Bashir Ahmad Minto, Maulana S.M. Tufail, Maulana Sadruddin, the spiritual head of the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, Lahore and Mallam S.P. Tayo from Ghana.⁸⁹

Maulana Tufail, a committed Ahmadi, as reveals the literature of the TML, was very instrumental in propagating the message of Ahmadiyyah. He conducted 'religious classes' in the Jamaats, conducted a course on Imamah and introduced a new phenomenon of interfaith meetings in Trinidad. Interfaith meetings were also convened in Barbados and Grenada by the TML. He also founded the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam Council for the Western Hemisphere⁹⁰ and inaugurated an Annual Convention which was later held regularly upto 1975 in Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad by rotation.

The TML with the assistance of the Ahmadiyyah Council for the Western Hemisphere had made available the services of Mallam S.P. Tayo, a visiting missionary from Young Nawair ud Din Society Ghana. He was stationed in San Fernando.⁹¹ His specialization was to work among the Afro-Trinidadians. He also toured Guyana and Suriname in connection with his missionary work. He was a simple and a devoted Muslim but later converted to Ahmadiyyah. When he came to Trinidad for the second time, he made recourse to pure Islam.⁹² The TML had Ahmadiyyah influence until mid 1970's when Kamal Hydal took the Ahmadiyyah members from

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.17.

⁹² My interview with Dr. Riza Mohammad on October 22, 1995 at Islamabad, Pakistan.

the TML and formed his own organization at Freeport.⁹³ The League has since kept the name. The Trinidad Muslim League incorporated. Its present President claims that it has been purified of the Ahmadi "impurities" and now it is a Muslim organization.⁹⁴ The TMLs constitution has been amended to prevent the Ahmadis from being the members. Those individuals who were influenced by Ahmadis by the 'former' TML have formed two separate factions of Anjuman-e-Ishaate-Islam (Lahori Group) and Dawat-ul-Islam group with their headquarters in Freeport and Gasparillo respectively. The present TML is the member of the Muslim co-ordinating Council (M.C.C.). The TML operates five schools, three primary schools located in St. Joseph, Rio Claro and San Fernando and a secondary school and a Kindergarten are also in operation at the St. Joseph site.

ANJUMAN SUNNAT-UL-JAMAAT ASSOCIATION (ASJA)

The Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association (hereinafter called ASJA) was formed in 1933 by Haji Ruknudeen Sahib, and in 1935, it was incorporated by an Act of Parliament. The majority of the leaders and members follow the maslak of Ahl al Sunnah wa-al Jamaah. The ASJA has, however, the majority of Muslims today in its folds⁹⁵, and is greatly credited for keeping Islam alive in Trinidad.

The ASJA, through its different activities through the years, has been able to promote Islam and educate Muslims. Maktabas were established where children learnt to read the Quran, they were also taught verses of the Quran and basic things of the religion like Wudu, Salaat and Duas. It was this education that was transmitted on from generation to generation, which kept Muslims adamant to Islam.

On the 4th March, 1950, Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and his private secretary Dr. Muhammad Fazul-ur Rahman Ansari of the, World Federation of Islamic Missions with headquarters in Karachi, Pakistan, visited Trinidad. Siddiqui called for the formation of the Central Muslim Youth Organization (CMYO). During his stay, Siddiqui was able to galvanize

⁹³ Fatima Ali, A Historical Development of Muslim Organization in Trinidad, Caribbean Studies Thesis, (The University of the West Indies (1990-91), p.27.

⁹⁴ My interview with Dr. Nasser Mustapha, President TML on February 6, 1995.

⁹⁵ Mansoor Ibrahim, "Islam in Trinidad and Tobago", p.24.

the ASJA. Even today, many traditionalist Muslims remember the late Siddiqui and the late Ansari with great respect and adoration, considering them as "Alma Matas."

The CMYO was formed in 1950, with its first President being Kamaluddin Mohammed (ex Peoples' National Movement Minister). Branches were opened in most Jamaats in the country. Among its past Presidents are people like Dr. Wahid Ali (ex President of the Senate).

Its main activities were, among other things, promoting sporting and social activities amongst the Muslim youths, annual religious examinations, Quranic recitations, singing Qasidas and public speaking competitions. In the 1960s, after operating for some time under direct influence of the ASJA, it became established as the "Youth Arm of ASJA" and changed its name to the Trinidad and Tobago Muslim Youth Organization (Youth Arm of ASJA).

The most well known President-General of the ASJA was the late Haji Shaffick Rahman. "The Haji" as he was popularly known, was the son of Hafiz Yacoob Ali and was married to the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mohammed Hosein of California (Trinidad). After his death, Haji Sattar of Princes Town took over as President-General. He, however, could not live up to the reputation of the late Shaffick Rahman, whose iron-willed determination was well known.

The ASJA of the past was responsible for alienating young and vibrant members of the Organization, through the dogma of the administration, for instance, during the 1970s, Mr. Zabar Baksh, former Assistant Secretary, Public Relations Officer and Vice President was forced to resign because he raised the issue that uneducated Muslims in administrative positions should not have the power to control or denounce Islamic scholars. In fact, he stated that Muslim Organizations (ASJA) should utilize the Missionaries, and not feel that they (ASJA) owned the Muslim community ⁹⁶.

The President-General, Shaffick Rahman, could not accept this and threatened to resign. Subsequently Mr. Zabar Baksh was not permitted to address the members of the ASJA. He was motivated to produce a booklet and a handout entitled "Masjids belong to Allah". The Central idea of the hand out is:

The Houses of Allah are increasingly being treated by at least certain sections of our community as private and personal properties. They are turned into arenas of cold war, revenge

⁹⁶ My interview with Zabar Baksh, August 2, 3, 1991.

and vendetta among various sections of the Muslim Community. Among the Muslims themselves, they are closed to some and open to others depending on their whims and fancies, likes and dislikes of the administrative hierarchy of the organizational leadership⁹⁷.

Within the ranks of ASJA, crisis was brewing during the reign of Shaffick Rahman. For years the Pilgrimage (Hajj) Committee had not been giving financial reports, nor was there any general accountability to the Executive or the General Council. At the same time Shaffick Rahman had been appointed Rabita's representative in Trinidad. Previously by a section of the executive for financial accountability vis-a-vis any monies which might have been given to ASJA as donations from the Rabita were bluntly turned down. That section of the executive, who made up the majority and were now classified as "The Opposition," grew increasingly frustrated.

Meeting after meeting was aborted as soon as critical issues were raised. This led the "Opposition" to suspend Shaffick Rahman from the post of President pending an investigation by a disciplinary committee. Immediately a war of words began; the Shaffik Rahaman fraction termed the meeting "illegal" and "unconstitutional" even though they had summoned it, and Shaffik Rahman walked out as Presiding Chairman⁹⁸.

This "battle" ended in court, with the case being dismissed because the "Opposition" had not filed the papers properly. Thus on a legal technicality, the Rahman fraction won without having accounted to the executive. The "Opposition" moved out or withdrew from the ASJA and formed the Islamic Workers Council. It was later dissolved and its members teamed up with the Islamic Missionaries Guild.

The Trinidad and Tobago Muslim Youth Organization (TTMYO) had been decidedly neutral during the "battle" amongst their elder folks. But the Rahaman fraction perceived them to be supporting the Opposition, and as of the moment they (the Rahman fraction) won their battle; they ignored the TTMYO.

The ASJA itself now adopted the task of planning for the Muslim youths calling a National Muslim Youth Conference in two phases, and for both phases not inviting the TTMYO. The ASJA also reviewed its constitution omitting mention of the TTMYO as the Youth Arm of

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

ASJA. The members of the executive council of the TTMYO now experienced extreme difficulty in implementing its programmes both at the national and local levels.

In January, 1980, the TTMYO decided to revert to its original position of being the youth organization of the Muslim community rather than "Youth Arm of ASJA"⁹⁹. They saw by this time, that the majority of the Jamaats in the North of the Country were supporting the Opposition now known as the Islamic Workers Council, whilst those in the South were with the ASJA. Thus in an attempt to remain aloof and serve the youths of both camps, it decided to drop the term "Youth Arm of ASJA" and be instead, the Trinidad and Tobago Muslim Youth Organization with Amshard Mohammad as President.

But the ASJA would have none of this; they immediately summoned a meeting of some of their supporters, formed a committee, which they called the TTMYO (Youth Arm of ASJA). Therefore, there were two TTMYO's, one affiliated directly to ASJA the other not. However they were both ineffective in Muslim youth activities. The TTMYO (Youth Arm of ASJA) is now called the National Muslim Youth Organization with Rehan Abdool at the head. The other TTMYO after being beaten and dispirited, is now dead.

After Shaffick Rahman died, Haji Sattar took over in 1981. Haji Sattar however, could not fill the shoes of his predecessor. The ASJA, without a powerful, charismatic, determined and iron-willed leader, soon fell into a slump. Many Muslims, whilst frequenting ASJA's Mosques, were not members of the Organization and a feeling of indifference set in towards the ASJA. The youths seldom came to mosque, except may be for Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. This non-interest in ASJA showed up even whilst Shaffick Rahman was in power. One might ask why was ASJA in such a state of atrophy up until 1990. The ASJA, like most other organizations, cannot escape from history: the past experiences and traditions of the people affect the present and the future.

There appeared to be a closed system type thinking in the entire Muslim community. This type of thinking appears to be deeply rooted in the history of "the Indentured" in Trinidad, having been formed and set in a Victorian colonial society in which every extrovert action (culturally, religiously, politically) was deemed to be subversive and anti-state.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

When "the indentured" sons emerged as leaders, having been English educated, they were prepared or trained to play along with the developing psychological attitude that British culture, British religion, British politics was and will always remain superior and every thing else is inferior. Thus they perceived and thought that the religions, the cultures and the politics of their fathers (the Indentured servants), had no right to power, authority and influence in the local society.

The ASJA, therefore, grew out of this system. Its main purpose seems to have been "to preserve and to protect" the values and practices of the Indian Muslims, whilst stifling the voices of discontent or change. However, the environment which the ASJA catered for no longer exists. The people, the institutions, the society have been transformed. From a colonial society to a republican state, from an agricultural economy to one based on oil and becoming increasingly industrialised, from prestige and privileged education to mass free education, from emphasis on extended family to insistence on nuclear family, from dependant children to independent and "rebellious" youths, from blind acceptance to the inquiring mind.

The ASJA has been able to make a significant thrust into primary school education. The full authority and responsibility was vested in the central executive. The schools were built in the following areas.

AREA	YEAR	AREA	YEAR
Charlieville	1953	Princes Town	1954
Carapichaima	1953	San Fernando	1955
Rio Claro	1953	Point Fortin	1959
Barrackpore	1954		

While the ASJA operates seven primary schools in Trinidad, many have criticised their standard of education. It is felt that while their academic performance is poor, even their Islamic teaching is not of a high standard.

COLLEGE	AREA	YEAR
ASJA Girls	Tacarigua (later transferred to Tunapuna)	1964
ASJA Girls	San Fernando	1964
ASJA Girls	Princes Town (now defunct)	1967
ASJA Boys	San Fernando	1964

The Boys' and Girls' Colleges in San Fernando are now state-aided and the College at Tunapuna has been converted into an Institute of Islamic Studies.

ASJA's educational institution hold three thousand students and employ more than one hundred and sixty teachers¹⁰⁰. Many schools which were operating in "Sheds" are now being rebuilt with modern facilities.

Many Trinidadian Muslims talk about the jurisdiction of ASJA over educational institutions and mosques. This jurisdiction is considered by them to be more apparent than real¹⁰¹. Mr. Muntaz Ali, a college lecturer in Trinidad and a Muslim activist associated with IMG and now with the Caribbean Islamic Secretariat (CIS) writes that ASJA's schools are operating along secular lines since government pays the salaries of the teachers of all recognized denominational schools, gives annual grants for the maintenance of schools and supervises the curriculum. Each denominational school is allowed half-an-hour per day for religious instructions but these periods are largely under-utilized with the result that no meaningful impact is made on the lives of the students¹⁰². The reasons for the ineffectiveness of this period can be two: first the recruitment of teachers for the elementary and secondary Muslim schools does not ensure the teacher's ability and suitability to teach Islam in the schools. Second, the schools do not operate with a planned programme or syllabus for Islamic education. If such a syllabus does exist, it is certainly not implemented. As far as mosques are concerned, these are not built by

¹⁰⁰ Mansoor Ibrahim, "Islam in Trinidad and Tobago" p. 24.

¹⁰¹ Muntaz Ali, "Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago", a Situation Report presented in the Intl'. Islamic Leadership Training Camp, Islamabad, Oct. 1992. p.15

¹⁰² Ibid.

ASJA but through the efforts of Muslims of various localities. ASJA's control over these mosques rests with the allegiance of the Imams to whom a small stipend is paid out of an annual ecclesiastical grant given by the government¹⁰³.

Most of these Imams are not properly trained or qualified to provide necessary education and information on Islam¹⁰⁴.

To make-up the deficiency, each Jamaat elects an executive head by a President who is generally the de facto head of the Jamaat. The function of the Imam in such cases is to conduct the salat, the ceremonial parts of the weddings and funerals, and to make the Du'a at the opening and closing of Jamaat functions. It is observed that people of other organizations are not allowed to conduct their activities in the mosques controlled by ASJA.

ASJA has been planning to set up an institution for training of Imams but could not materialise the project¹⁰⁵.

Tobago

Tobago, a small island of 116 square miles (300 square kilometres), is 21 miles (33 km) to the north-east of Trinidad. The island is 44 km down its main ridge and just about 13 across its broadest section. The island's international airport, deep-water harbour, friendly people, vibrant tourism sector and natural flora and fauna continue to attract the attention of people from various parts of the world.

The Muslim community in Tobago comprises of almost thirty families of both African and East Indian descent totaling nearly one hundred and sixty Muslims. While Salaah is conducted regularly in the mosque, classes for children and adults are conducted in the temporary wooden structure which served as the mosque for several years. The small community is visited regularly by Muslims from Trinidad while vacationing or conducting business in Tobago and by Muslims from among the hosts of tourists.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ My interview with Mansoor Ibrahim, President-General ASJA on February 4, 1995.

¹⁰⁵ Abdul Wahid Hamid, Muslims in the West Indies p.25.

The first known Musalims settled in Tobago were in 1953. They were John Ameer Khan and Rustam Mohammad, grandfather of Azard Mohammad, a member of Tobago Jamaat.

Hosein Mohammad who lived next door to the first temporary Masjid had come to Tobago in 1956. He worked at the Bata Shoe Store in Scarborough, the capital of the Island. He lived in the upper floor of this shoe store. Congregational prayer started in 1958 at the home of Mr. Mohammad with the few Muslims present in the surroundings¹⁰⁶.

The first funeral prayer was offered for the deceased Joseph Abraham in 1966¹⁰⁷. The prayer (Salat-al-Janaza) was led by Moulvi Fateh Dad Khan who came from Trinidad only for this purpose.

In 1968, Mr. Wahid Ali, a male nurse working at the Scarborough County Hospital started Da'wah Work among the Muslims and organized the salat system. The prayers were then offered at different houses of Muslims¹⁰⁸.

In 1975, a wooden structure was erected on the lands of Mr. Mansoor Ali at Spring Garden, Orange Hill Road. This was used as Masjid. In 1977, the Municipal authorities were approached to get permission for construction of a Masjid at the same site but permission was not given by the authorities. A suite was then purchased at Lambeau for TT\$ 17,000. Members of the Muslim community felt that the site for the Masjid was too small and offered little room for expansion. In 1981, another site was selected and a Masjid was built by Mr. Mansoor Ali and Mr. Jamal Mustafa¹⁰⁹.

The Foundation Stone of the mosque, Masjid-al-Taubah, was laid more than seven years ago by Dr. Khalil Al-Khalil on behalf of Prince Muhammad Bin Faisal, the n Head of the Department of Islamic Affairs, Saudi Arabian Embassy, Washington DC, USA.

At an approximate cost of \$350,000.00, the structure covering 1200 square feet was built on twenty thousand square feet of land acquired in the early eighties at the cost of \$75,000.00.

¹⁰⁶ IMG's file No. 5 on Tobago entitled "History of Islam in Tobago" p.1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Construction began during September '92 by Shazim Ali of Charlieville, Trinidad and was completed in September 1993. The selection of the contractor was done through the tendering process. The Late Yusuf Mitchel, one of the 'Muslim Elders' in Trinidad and a renowned architect, designed the Masjid.

Established in 1970, the Tobago Muslim Association, which oversees the affairs of the mosque, is affiliated to the Islamic Missionaries Guild and is also a member of the United Islamic Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago.

The wooden structure also serves as the Imam's quarters which was occupied by Yaqub Abdallah Muhammad and his family. Born in Nigeria, Imam Yaqub pursued a Bachelors degree in Shariah and Islamic Studies at the International University of Africa based in Sudan. During his six year stay in Sudan, he learned the Arabic language and memorised the Holy Qur'an.

Imam Yaqub first came to Tobago in 1994 when he spent three months on the island. On his return to Tobago in September 1995 with his family, he acquired a three-year work permit and officially took up the job of Imam of Masjid-al-Taubah. In addition to conducting the five daily congregational prayers (salaah) at the mosque, Imam yaqub initiated regular classes for adults and children and was available for counselling, consultation and Da'wah.

The Tobago Muslim community suffered a great loss when Imam Yaqub and his family left Tobago on Friday 8th November 1995 to join the small Muslim community in St. Maarten. While the executive committee of Masjid-al-Taubah was experiencing difficulty in meeting its commitments to Imam Yaqub for several months, Imam Yaqub in turn felt he was being a burden on the small community with very limited resources. As a result, Imam Yaqub opted to fill the vacancy created by the departure of the Imam of the mosque at Philipsburg, the capital of St. Maarten.

Matters related to the Masjid and the Muslim community of Tobago are run by a president assisted by three committees: Educational, Financial and a Da'wah committee. There is a Shura which also includes the Imam and the Muazzin of the Masjid. This Shura plans the organized by the community making use of the premises of this Masjid:

1. Children Maktab Classes.
2. Adults Islamic Studies Classes for male and female.
3. Adult Arabic Classes for both the genders.

4. Qur'an Classes: Hifz and Tajweed.
5. Advanced Islamic Studies Classes.
6. Study Circles.
7. Training Courses for the New Muslims.
8. Sisters Circle.

ISLAMIC PUBLICATIONS IN TRINIDAD

Essays on Islamic Topics

by Dr. Ebrahim Kazim

Published by: Islamic Academy, 3 Rapsey Street, St. Clair, Trinidad, W.I. Pages: 151.

This book was presented to me by the author on February 2, 1995 in his Clinic in Port of Spain when I approached him for an interview. This book is for free distribution like other publications of the author. The author is though a medical doctor by profession yet his knowledge on Islam is commendable. He has substantiated his views with references from the Quran and Hadith. He writes about this book in the introduction that the book is compiled solely to stir up intellectual activity and generate new enthusiasm among the readers with view to participate in modern technology and research. He continues, "Part of my text that I have expounded in this booklet may be proven incorrect in view of my new knowledge which may become available to us in the future"...The book has been dedicated to his parents and wife. The foreword of the book was written by Mr. Hasan Noor Ali, the President of Trinidad and Tobago. He comments in his foreword: The articles are interesting and instructive....They are thought provoking, even if some of the contents be controversial". Dr. Kazim is originally from Iran and knows Persian well, he has started his first chapter of the Book with a praise: Thanksgiving poem "Banaam e Khuda Wand Jan Aafreen". Second chapter deals with death, Rooh and Nafs. All these three topics are dealt with separately in a philosophical and scientific manner. Dr. Kazim writes about the phenomenon of death:

"Death is not the end of all existence. Death is the threshold of far more glorious life, life on this planet may end, but this life on earth is only a small insignificant portion of our entire life, because the soul or rooh continues to exist into eternity. This death should not be called the end. It should be called a "Transfer". About Rooh [Soul] he says:

"This divine rooh is good and pure, and hence the baby is innocent. The soul that is present in the body at the time of birth, starts off with a clean slate. But Allah also created evil which tempts and laces the embodied soul in varying degrees depending on particular environment in the child is exposed as he or she grows older. Then he delves into Nafs e Ammara, Nafse Lawwama and Nafse Mutma innah. Other chapters of the book are; Islam and Intoxicants, Time, spiritual and medical benefits of "Siyam" the Islamic fast, Prophet

Muhammad's physical ascension [Meiraj] to the heavens in the light of science and the Quran, Ways in which this word will end, Facing death: are you prepared? Sijda or prostration, Significance of Eid ul Adha, Medical aspects of forbidden Foods in Islam, Medical aspects of male. Circumcision in Islam and About its reader:

The Sacred Journey by Omar Mohammed, Sam's Printing Service Limited, 5 Muhammed Ville, El Socorro, San Jaun, Trinidad, W.I. pages: 117.

This book is compiled by Omar Mohammad, the Managing Director of the Omar Travels, Trinidad who led 25 groups to the Holy Land, 13 for hajj and 12 for Umra from 1980 to 1992. In this book an attempt has been made to show the pilgrims as how best they can utilize their time in the two Holiest Cities of Makkah and Madina. The book provides information about a pilgrim's preparation for this sacred journey. The book consists of fifteen chapters namely: The City of Makkah, the importance of Hajj, the performance of Hajj, the Talbiyah, the Tawaaf, Sa'ee between Safa and Marwa, the rites of Hajj, Supplications, Rules for women, Ziyaraat in Makka, Madina- the city of the Prophet, Ziyaraat in Madina, Salutations, Salaams to Jannatul Baqee.

ECONOMIC IMPERATIVES OF ISLAMIC DAWAH

By: IMTIAZ ALI

Published by: Muslim Credit Union, 11-Eastern Main Road, Curepe, Trinidad, pages: 28.

This was actually an article prepared by Imtiaz Ali, ex Manager, Muslim Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited which was presented to the Regional Conference of the Muslim World League on "Islamic Propagation and the Challenges Facing it in the Caribbean Region" held on March 20-22, 1989 at the Trinidad Hilton Hotel, Port of Spain. The booklet consists of five chapters and two appendices. These chapters are: Definition of terms. The economic system of Islam, Trends in non-Islamic economics and their impact on Muslims, Islamic Dawah and Conclusion. In the conclusion the author writes:

Islam founded an economic relationship among the nations living under Muslim rule. It established and organized international trade links between the different parts of the Muslim world. If Islam has a natural economic system of its own the presumption is that economic factors underline its spread in all areas, times and circumstances and among all the peoples who embrace it. These factors nor indeed the main ones but contribute with other factors such as spiritual, moral, intellectual, and others to the propagation and spread of Islam.

Appendix I embodies a case study of the Muslim Credit Union Co-operative Society in which the background and formation, objectives, organizational structure, growth and development, services, benefits, self help and future projections of the Society are given. Appendix II espouses the teachings of Quran and Hadith on Riba.

Islamic Worker's Training Manual Book I & II

Prepared and published by: Education and Tarbiyah Committee of the Islamic Da'wah Movement (IDM), Pundit Street, Elsocorro, SanJuan, Trinidad, W.I. pages: 26.

This is a useful work done by the Islamic Dawah Movement towards the Islamic Tarbiyah of the members in its fold.

Islamic Da'wah Movement (IDM) claims that it derives the principles of its organization's activities and of education and training from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The IDM has devised and adopted the Education and Tarbiyah programme because it has proven to be "the best way of educating and moulding the characters of Islamic Workers" (p.3). The system is implemented in the form of Work Units. The work unit has been defined as "a special organic unit of Islamic Movement preferably with a minimum of three and a maximum of ten members, meeting weekly; established for the purpose of training and preparing workers for the cause of Allah" (p.30). The work unit is not merely a study group rather it is a Tarbiyah unit that involves studying, practising, and working for Islam. It is an effort of realising an Islamic community on a small scale. Such a group is distinct and different from any other ordinary group. It provides training in administration, teaching and special skills, while at the same time developing moral and spiritual values in the individual. The programme is also relevant to Muslims who have returned to Islam from a non-Muslim background thus reducing the need for a separate and special programme for new Muslims.

The contents of the Book I are:

Introduction, the work unit, guidelines to stage I, sisters stage I, brothers stage I, monthly personal report form, Islamic Worker's recommended reading list, daily programme for Islamic workers and daily questionnaire for the Islamic Worker. The recommended reading list for their worker contains books on Tafsir, Quranic Sciences, Hadith Sciences, Sirah of the Prophet (ASW), Islamic ideology, women and family life, Islamic Movement, character

building, comparative ideological studies, Islamic law and politics, history and Islamic economics.

The recommended books are mostly written by Abul Ala Maudoodi, Hasan al Banna, Khurram Murad, Khurshid Ahmad, Yusuf al Qardawi, Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi and Fathi Yakan. The contents of Book II are as following:

Introduction, the work unit, guidelines to stage II, Brothers stage II, Sisters stage II, guidelines for Ramadan and Eid ul Fitr, Basic books for a Muslim home and recommended reading list for non-Muslims. The first two chapters, viz: introduction and work unit are same as in Book I, however, the general regulations of stage II differ from stage I. The stage II is an advanced level of studies on the Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic studies, personal improvement study, Mu'amalaat, duas/azkaar, skills and the Caribbean studies.

The Brother's stage II running on three pages (11, 12, & 13) is a heavy programme which contains memorization of ahadith (23 ahadith from Arba'een Nawawi) and study of twenty suggested books. Course prescribed for sisters (sister's stage II) is also a heavy dose. The course for this stage however varies for sisters. The syllabus prescribed for brothers and sisters is compared as following:

For Brothers of stage II

1. Guidelines for Workers
(A.A. Maududi)
2. Sacrifice: The making of
a Muslim (K. Murad)
3. Fiqh As-Sirah (Al-Ghazali)
4. Problems affecting the
Da'wah and the Da'iyah
(Fathi Yakan)

For Sisters of stage II

1. Guidelines for Workers
2. Sacrifice: The making of
a Muslim.
3. Life of Muhammad (ASW)
(Abdul Hamid Siddiqui)
4. Organization in Islamic
Party (Islamic Party Publication)

The Book II also enumerates qualities a member of the work unit is expected to attain and the changes he is required to bring about in his life.

The "God" That Never Was

Author: Not mentioned

Printed by: Haresh Baksh and Family

Warren Ville Road, Cunupia, Trinidad.

This book represents a sort of polemical literature. It looks that there are some other books of this nature but this researcher could not have access to it. The purpose of writing this booklet is to rebut a man in Benoni whose name has not been mentioned. According to author of the booklet, that man was not qualified in theology and was proclaiming himself an apostle of Christ, appointed by God to convert Muslims to Christianity. "Because he is a lawyer by profession, he is adept at juggling with words and quoting the Holy Quran totally out of context without knowing a word of Arabic. He wants Muslims to believe that Jesus was also a God, a belief that is abhorrent to us, because it is an antithesis of the Absolute perfection of Allah (SWT)," (p.1).

The author has very strongly rejected this thesis that "Jesus is God because he shares the nature of God, and he is in every way like God". The author has quoted numerous quotations form the Bible to prove that Jesus neither shared the nature of God nor is he in any way like God. He is, therefore, definitely not God. This booklet is for free distribution.

Al Kanz (Treasures.....)

Compiled by: Imam Abu Hisham Hassan.

M.P.P.Publication, Trinidad.

Pages: 95

Al Kanz literally means 'Treasure' or 'The Treasure'. According to the compiler of work, "Al Kanz is meant as reference material for seekers of truth and students of Islam". The work was sponsored by the family of the late Zeenat and Badal Khan of Abdul Aziz lineage for the sake of 'thawab' (reward from Allah (SWT)).

The contents of the book are as follows:

Luqman's advice to his son, the way to the Quran (by Khurram Murad), selected Verses from the Quran, Sunnah and ahadith of the Prophet, faith and obedience in Islam (by Maududi) Sacrifice (by Khurram Murad), Duties to parents, Pointers on choosing marriage partners (by Rabi' al Hakeem), Tips to better marriage (by Muntaqima Abdur Rashid), Islamic expressions,

advice to a serious Muslim (by Hasan al Banna), The Barelvis, about Badal and Zeenat Khan, Duas and Islamic adaab, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Qaylullah, Al Fatiha and the last ten Suras of the Quran, Allah's thought at all times.

This book is a comprehensive selection of important writings on various aspect of Islam. I could not however understand the inclusion of a topic 'Brelives' in the book. It does not serve any purpose except to stir disunity in the ranks of the Muslim community of Trinidad.

The Soul of the World

Abdullah Bilal Omowale, p.151.

Abdullah Bilal Omowale formerly Andy Thomas is a prominent Afro-Trinidadian leader who had migrated to Cuba after his release from jail in Trinidad. He was involved in the attempted coup in 1990 in Trinidad led by Imam Yasin Abu Bakr. Previously, Omowale was sentenced to death in 1975 for supporting a resistance movement during a period of political repression in Trinidad. After spending twelve years on deathrow there was a change of government and a public out cry for his release. On August 31, 1987 he was granted amnesty and set free. This book is written in response to Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses". He has analysed in this book the nature of Islam and the nature of the West and made an effort to present a profound comparative study of both civilizations in historical and sociological perspective. The book consists of seven chapters. The topics are:

The age of materialism, the brotherhood of man, the African Muslim, the golden legacy, the on slaught of imperialism, the crime of Zionism and the new page of history. Perhaps it is a single book written by any Afro Trinidadian Muslim intellectual which shows his devotion to Islam and profound study of Islam.

Answer to Question on Religion

By: M.F. Rahman

Published by: The way of Islam Foundation,

C/o 2 Queen Street, Port of Spain,

Trinidad, W.I.

1st Edition: June 1993, 36 pages.

This booklet was written with an intent to answer some of the questions which many people frequently face. The booklet provides some information which may help the enquiring

mind to gain insight into the complex issues which center around knowledge of God, man and the universe. The author has selected ten questions to answer. The booklet includes a section from Bible which presages the religion of Islam, its Prophets, its Books and followers. Last three pages of the booklet are devoted to the 'teachings of Islam in brief'.

The author has answered few questions in detail, for example, question number 9; "Islam presaged in the Bible" which is spread over about nine pages while some other question are dealt with very briefly like question number 5, related to the belief in the Hereafter. Too much brevity in the answer has led to non clarity in understanding of the view point of the author.

Islam and the Poverty Challenge:

Author: Imtiaz Ali

20 Springvale Road, Valsayn, Trinidad, W.I.

The central thesis proposed by Mr. Imtiaz Ali in his booklet is that the challenge of world poverty could be answered by adherence to the philosophy and practice of Islam. Although quite short (only 37 pages), Mr. Imtiaz Ali has succeeded in convincing the reader of the seriousness of the issue itself, and the pressing need for such a problem to be addressed whether or not one is a Muslim.

His recommendation for Muslims in their response to the poverty challenge is to become better Muslims by accepting and practicing Islam in its entirety. He also urges cooperation with all groups, Muslim and non-Muslim in alleviating poverty.

To all readers, he encourages better treatment of the poor in terms of care, consideration and respect and at the same time he recommends a tough, no-nonsense approach in exposing both governmental and non-governmental policies that disadvantage the poor mainly through widening disparities in income and wealth.

To the non-Muslim readers in particular whose ideological perspectives may be conditioned to espouse either capitalism or communism, Mr. Imtiaz Ali makes it clear that the free market system has not been successful in dealing with poverty. In fact he argues that unbridled capitalism has been a major contributor to the problem of poverty in the world today. He does not bother to deal however with the planned economy model since this model is no longer seen as viable.

For those who might argue in favour of government intervention to temper the harsh consequences of the operation of the free market, the author charges that the private entrepreneur, as any student of basic economics knows, is driven by profit maximization and not by poverty elimination.

By page six Mr. Imtiaz Ali dispenses with the attempt of Western governments to successfully deal with the problem and proceeds to present a solution that everyone seems to be aware of but un-willing to implement. In an indirect way, Mr. Imtiaz Ali answers the question that will be raised about why poverty has not been completely eliminated in Muslim countries. He alludes to the possibility that in many Muslim countries Islamic principles are sometimes compared in their application to economic and social realities.

The thrust of his argument focuses on the misperception of Islam merely as a religion with the attendant corollary of "rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's and rendering unto God's what is God's. Mr. Imtiaz Ali thus establishes the core of his argument that everything in Islam, material and non-material, spiritual and worldly originates with God and ends with God. There is no separation between a man's private business affairs and his spiritual pursuits. A man is responsible not only for his own welfare but is also obligated to spend out of his own wealth for the benefit of the needy. This multidimensional character of Islam The author argues, "qualifies it to enter the arena of the battle against poverty".

The remainder of his booklet focuses on how Islam as a comprehensive system can utilize its social, economic, political and spiritual dimensions to alleviate the evil of poverty.

Mr. Imtiaz Ali's booklet is not only an attempt to present an alternative approach to the eradication of poverty that is the Islamic approach- it also serves the purpose of informing those unfamiliar with Islam about the basic teachings of this "way of life" and can thus fulfill the function of removing fear, prejudice and misunderstanding about Islam. This can serve not only to strengthen the forces that work for the eradication of poverty but can also foster better relations among our diverse peoples for a better tomorrow.

Quraanic Reader: Step by step

(For children and Adults)

Compiled by: Mufti Shabil Ali

Published by: Darul Uloom Trinidad and Tobago
 Rashaad Avenue, Mon Plasir Aenue,
 Cunupia, Trinidad, W.I.

Pages: 60, First edition, August 1992.

The Quraanic Reader was compiled by the late Mufti Shabil Ali, Principal Darul Uloom Trinidad and Tobago originally for his two sons to learn and read the Holy Quran. He has compiled this book with the following main features:

- (a) Partial transliteration to help the students and also parent's participation in many cases.
- (b) Many exercises in recognition of whole letters and joined letters step by step.
- (c) Introduction to vowels and *sukoon*.
- (d) Inclusive basic rules of *Tajweed* at relevant occasions.
- (e) Guidelines for the recitation of verses and *surahs* of the Quran.

Since the compiler has adopted a step by step method, so the book has been named "Quraanic Reader-step by step.

Mufti Shabil Ali himself had learnt *Tajweed* from his teacher Maulana Abdus Saud Khan, Principal of Darul Uloom Sabilur Rashaad in Banglore, India. The book consists of twelve chapters and some selected *surahs* of the Quran with guidelines. The author has explained the principles of *Tajweed* through 74 exercises in this small book.

Basic Arabic Sentences

Compiled by: Mufti Shabil Ali

Published by: Darul uloom Trinidad and Tobago Rashaad Avenue, Mon Plasir Road, Cunupia, Trinidad, West Indies.

47, First edition: June 1994. Pages: 47.

This book was compiled for children to learn and speak the Arabic language. The Darul Uloom Trinidad and Tobago, in April 1992, had started on annual basis a three month course in Islamic Studies for post common entrance students. Arabic language had been included in the syllabus of this course. Mufti Shabil Ali felt the need to compile a textbook suitable for children of the upper primary level between the ages of nine and twelve.

The author has kept the following considerations in his mind while compiling this book:

- i) Use of transliteration throughout the book
- ii) A suitable range of dictionary
- iii) Simplified grammar rules
- iv) Sufficient exercises for translation
- v) Revision of vocabulary

The book consists of ten lessons and one supplement. The study of this book enables a student of upper primary level to understand the use of 'this and 'that', masculine and feminine nouns, use of prepositions, personal pronouns, the use of the definite article 'the', identification of verbs of present and past tense. Language used by the author in this book is easy to understand.

Islamic Studies for Children

By: Mufti Shabil Ali

Darul Uloom Trinidad and Tobago Rashaad Avenue, Mon Plasir Road, Cunnpia, Trinidad, W.I.

First edition, July 1994, Pages: 98.

This book was written for children to study various fundamental aspects of Islam. This fulfills the requirement of a three month course in Islamic Studies for post Common Entrance students conducted by the Darul Uloom Trinidad and Tobago. This includes a variety of Islamic subjects for children of upper primary level between the ages of nine and twelve. The book includes the following topics:

- i) The five pillars of Islam.
- ii) General information on the Quran, Hadith and Islamic Jurisprudence.
- iii) Islamic History.
- iv) Geographical skills which are relevant to basic Islamic practices.
- v) Islamic Values.
- vi) Islamic festivals and special occasions.

These topics have been chosen to meet the basic requirements of moulding a child with Islamic values and practices as well as building interest in a child using secular education to

understand Islam clearly. The child will then develop a desire to acquire a balanced education comprising both Islamic and secular. The syllabus also includes basic Arabic language.

This book is employed for the Islamic education of children between nine and thirteen years of age, also for daily classes (2 hours) for a period of three months. However, those adults who have not studied much of Islam can use this book as an introduction to the secondary level of Islamic education. The book is written according to Hanafi school of thought. It consists of six chapters, eight sections and twelve tests.

CONCLUSION

Islamic institutions and organizations of Trinidad have maintained the continuity of Islamic work from the period of indentureship to the present developed form of missionary work. Mosques, maktabas, madrassas and Islamic publications have influenced the Muslim society of Trinidad considerably. There is an increased Islamic ambience due to hard work of Islamic organizations like Islamic Missionaries Guild. This Islamic consciousness is not restricted to Trinidad, it has travelled to other Caribbean islands like Guyana. The Islamic organizations of Guyana will be studied in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VIII

ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN GUYANA

Muslims constitute about 10% of the population of Guyana. Because of the harsh conditions of indentureship like long working hours, the discouraging and sometimes hostile attitude of the administration at the Estates, Muslims were not afforded much opportunities for development of their organizations and institutions. Despite this, the Indian Muslims were able to build and maintain over a hundred *Masjids* throughout the settled coastland of Guyana. Annexed to most of the *Masjids* were madrasahs or maktabas which were used to teach the recitation of the Qur'an with the use of Urdu phonetics. Urdu was preferred by the early generations of the East Indians in Guyana. In these institutions, the students were taught as how to offer prayers, sing *Qaseedas* and *Nazm* and some of a selected few learnt to deliver *Eid* and Friday *Khutbas*, conducting the *Nikah* and preparing the dead for burial (*Tajhiz wa takfin*).

In those early days, the Islamic knowledge was scarce and limited. *Ta'zia* processions became an integral part of Muslim's life. After sometime, however this celebration was marked with liquor consumption and other immoral activities. Soon Hindu rum-shop owners became the organizers of the *Ta'zia* procession in which competitions among Muslims and Hindus were encouraged. This practice continued until the 1920s when a group of dedicated Muslims expressed their resoluteness to combat with un-Islamic practices in the name of *Ta'zia*. They, thus formed a group called the Islamic Association of British Guiana. In 1931, another Muslim organization was formed by members of the Queenstown *Masjid* (the main mosque in the capital city) with the guidance of a visiting *Khateeb* from Bombay, India, by the name of Maulana Sayyid Shams ud Din. This organization was named Sadr Anjuman-e-Islam. The main objective of the Anjuman was to safeguard the interest of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah.

In 1948, the Islamic Association and the Anjuman merged together to form the Guyana United Sadr Islamic Anjuman (GUSIA). With the split of the independence movement, the Muslims became divided and in the 1960's even the GUSIA stood divided. There was one faction under Yakoob Ali who supported the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) and another under Mohammad Nisar supported the Peoples National Congress (PNC). This situation continued until

the late 1970's. During this period, there were bitter disputes between these two factions and Muslims once again lost their direction and leadership.

This hopeless situation caused emergence of many Muslim groups, all calling for unity and brotherhood. Between 1945 and 1975 several groups were formed within the Muslim community. These were the Islamic Missionaries Guild (1950's), the Muslim Youth Organization (MYO) of Guyana (1950's), Jamiat Ulama-e-Deen (1960's), the Guyana United Muslim Party (GUMP), a political Party (1960's), Berbice Islamic Sunnatul Anjuman (1970's), General Council of Islamic Brotherhood (1970's) and the Guyana Muslim Mission (1970's). With the disunity and sad plight of the Muslims for almost two decades, a group of concerned Muslims was in the making in Georgetown to remedy the situation. This group also carried consultation with most of the Masjids in Guyana and finally decided to form the Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG). It was officially installed on July 1, 1979. In 1977, a devoted Da'wah worker, Ahmad Ibraheem Ihwas, Charge D' Affairs at the Libyan Embassy in Guyana, started Da'wah work among the youths. He had a vast experience in this field and exposure to the nature of Movement oriented work. He combined in him both knowledge and experience of Dawah work and mobilized the Muslim youth of Guyana. He used the platform of MYO and in October 1978 formed the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT). Ahmad had a sort of co-ordination with Dr. Hussain Pasha who was present at the time in the neighbourly island of Trinidad. Both had the same ideas and perception of Islamic work. Ahmad Ihwas used Islamic literature of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan, such as, *Towards Understanding Islam, Islamic way of Life, Jihad in Islam, Moral Foundations of Islamic Movement, Guidelines to Workers, Islamic Movement: Prerequisites for success*, and the publications of Ikhwan al Muslimoon of Egypt, such as, *Milestones, In the Shade of the Quran (Part 30), What is our Message*. This literature was widely distributed for study and personal improvement of Da'wah workers.

With this brief background, a further detailed study of each Da'wah organization and Islamic institution is being presented. The discussion here will bring in focus their objectives, programmes, organizational setup as well as their role in proliferation of Islamic Da'wah.

The Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT)

The Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) claims to be the headquarters of the Islamic movement¹ in Guyana. Its aim is to establish Islam as a way of life and to educate all those who respond to the call of Islam.

When the headquarters of the Guyana Islamic Trust was established in October, 1978 its objective was to serve as a resource center and a meeting place for men and women involved in learning and teaching of Islam in various parts of the country. The top flat of a small two storey building at the corner of Water and Bentick Streets in Georgetown was rented for this purpose.

Over the last several years the number of persons who came to offer prayers (Salaat), use the library, browse through books, teach and rest, has considerably increased.

As the membership of the GIT grew, the building became incapable for the functions it was expected to perform, but as the financial conditions in Guyana worsened, it was virtually impossible to purchase or even build a suitable headquarters for the GIT. The activities of the GIT were initiated by Ahmad Ehwas, then Charge d' Affairs of the Libyan Embassy in Guyana.

His brief stay and his efforts in Guyana inspired many young Muslims to return to the practice of Islam. Incidentally, this was a time when the vast majority of Muslim youths were deviating from a Masjid-centered life and traditional Islamic practices, adopting instead, forms of un-Islamic behaviour. Ahmad Ehwas realized that in order to retain their Islamic identity the Muslim youth would have to return to the sources of guidance and inspiration for all Muslims viz: the Qur'an and the Sunnah. From his lectures and writings, it was clear that he strongly

¹ An "Islamic movement" is abroad term for the group, body or organization which stands for a total change in a society. It also stands for an overall resurgence, reawakening and concomitant institutional developments to achieve the Islamic ideals. For more information, see Islamic Resurgence, Challenges, Directions and Future Perspectives. A round table with Prof. Khurshid Ahmad, ed. Ibrahim M. Abu Rabi, (Islamabad: IPS) pp. 111-112.

believed that the only way to revive the community was to set it squarely on the foundation laid by the Qur'an and the Sunnah².

When Rauf Zaman was asked about the condition of the Muslim community in 1970's, he said that the Muslim youths were rebelling against "traditional" Islamic practices. The Imams and the elder members of the community were not capable of dealing with this problem and could do very little to curb it. Most of the better educated Muslims had immigrated or were on the verge of immigrating to North America.

There was no single organization to responsibly represent the religious, political, social and legal interests of the Muslims. The religious institutions that succeeded in holding the community together in the past were falling apart, leaving the community in disarray³.

The first step taken with the aim of retrieving the Islamic identity of young Muslims was to unite them together. This was done by organizing several outdoor and indoor youth camps (Liqa'at)⁴. The camps brought together youths from various parts of the country to learn about Islam in a friendly and recreational environment.

The Camps created a bond of brotherhood among hundreds of young Muslims in Guyana. It was also an innovative way to attract Muslim youths back to Islam and to teach them about the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (ASW). The result was encouraging. The Weekend camps grew into one-week and two-weeks training (Tarbiyah) courses. Longer live-in programmes were organized over school breaks and concentrated on learning and practicing Islam away from the home. The "Fara'id" (compulsory practices of worship in Islam) were

² My interview with Rauf Zaman, ex-Murshid of the GIT on January 20, 1995 at GII, Guyana.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The concept of 'Liqa' has probably come from the Jamaat-e-Islami of Indo-Pak sub-continent. The Jamaat uses the word 'Mulaqaat' for pursuing an individual or a group to an Islamic cause. It is of two types: individual and collective.

emphasized among the participants. In every area where programmes were held, a significant number of young Muslims turned out to participate.

The second step was to select a few of these participants keen to learning more about Islam and have them meet once a week for several hours. In these "Halaqah" (educational and Tarbiyah sessions) they studied Tafseer (explanation of the Qur'an), 'Sharh-e-Hadith' (explanation of Hadith), Aqeedah (Belief), Seerah (life of the Prophet Muhammad) (ASW), and Islamic history.

Perhaps it was not clear then, but now it is more evident, that the objective of the GIT, from its very inception, was to create a social milieu which could facilitate in reconstruction of the Islamic Institutions.

The attempt to define the necessary framework for the creation of Islamic institutions was successful, because the mechanism employed to generate quantity and develop quality among practicing Muslim youths proved to be effective.

These were the initial moments in the formation of the Guyana Islamic Trust. These were also the initial years in the consolidation of the Islamic movement. "The message of its workers in those years was to preach and practice Islam as a complete way of life. Simple and straightforward as it may seem now, it was not a message many Muslims in Guyana were accustomed to hearing. And for several years this message met with rigid resistance from elder members of the community⁵".

Looking back at the efforts of the GIT since 1977, three broad periods can be identified.

Expansion: 1979-1980

The emphasis was on the propagation of Islam and the education of Muslims. Liqa'at spread to everywhere in Guyana. The aim was to get Muslim brothers together and impart Islamic knowledge to them. "There was also a silent objective - bring Muslims back to the mosque in order to make it an integral part of their lives. In both areas the GIT was successful to an appreciable extent. By 1980, attendance to the Masajid and afternoon Islamic schools

⁵ My interview with Rauf Zaman.

showed tremendous increase⁶". Longer training camps, lasting for two to three weeks, were held in some parts of the country. Four types of camps were organized by the GIT in this period: Basic, Intermediate, Leadership and Orientation. Participants were selected to attend these extended camps on the basis of their knowledge and practice of Islam⁷.

During this period Mr. Ehwas travelled to the islands of the Caribbean making contact with several Muslim communities. He established contact with Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent, Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada, Belize and the Bahamas. The result of these contacts brought Dawood Abdul Haqq to Guyana.

Dawood had shortly returned to his home island of Barbados after studying at the Islamic University in Medina. He agreed to stay in Guyana for a short while to teach Islam on behalf of the Guyana Islamic Trust. From the time he arrived, his potential to the dissemination of Islamic knowledge was fully utilized.

Shortly after that Rauf Zaman, returned to Guyana (his home country), after spending several years studying Islam in both Pakistan⁸ and Egypt. In addition, Mr. Abdul Wahab, a graduate from the Islamic University of Medina, and a native from the African state of Ghana, came to Guyana as a missionary on behalf of Dar-ul-Ifita, Saudi Arabia. The combined efforts of these scholars created a significant impact on the Muslim community. Significant enough for them to feel that they could bring Muslims from all over the Caribbean to study Islam in Guyana for a duration of one year.

Education: 1980-1990

Muslim youths came to Guyana from almost all the islands in the Caribbean: Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Vincent, Bahamas, Grandad and Belize. They came to spend

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ My interview with Haseeb Ali, ex-Murshid of the GIT on January 15, 1995.

⁸ Rauf Zaman received his Islamic education from Aleemiyah Institute, Karachi, Pakistan and later at Al-Azhar University, Egypt.

a year in the pursuit of Islamic knowledge and stayed at the headquarters of the Muslim Youth Organization (M.Y.O.), presently the Headquarters of the CIOG.

The first year course (1980-81) was followed by another in 1981-82. Again the participants were taken from several countries in the Caribbean. Tafseer, Hadith, Faith, Islamic History, Life of the Prophet and Arabic were among the subjects taught to the students. The aim of these intensive courses was to prepare Muslims who would return to their communities and make significant contributions to the education and training of Muslims. Some of those who came to Guyana from the islands were new converts to Islam and had even memorized at least one Juz' (one thirtieth part of the Qur'an). Another important aspect of the course was the "training" (Tarbiyah) of the participants. Participants were required to get involved in Da'wah, teaching and general assistance to the Muslim community wherever needed.

By 1982 the economic situation in Guyana was rapidly deteriorating. Hundreds of Guyanese were fleeing the shores of Guyana. Many of the brothers and sisters affiliated with the GIT were also leaving for better economic opportunities in North America.

The lack of funds and the sad state of the economy prevented the launching of a third one year course in Guyana. The basic, intermediate, and leadership courses continued, but given the success of the two one-year courses, the need for a more extended educational programme for younger brothers became necessary. With its low operating budget, the GIT could hardly manage to meet the financial requirements of its monthly programmes much less initiate a college programme. However, given the success of the two one year programmes, many leading members of the GIT felt that an Islamic college was very important for the long term educational development of the community.

Training: 1986-1990

The year 1986 was a good one as any to launch a four year college programme to be called "Al-Ma'had Al-Islamiyyah Fi Guyana" (The Guyana Islamic Institute). With the assistance of Irshad Azami, a Dar-ul-Ifita sponsored worker from India, the GIT launched the Guyana Islamic Institute (GII). The plan of the GII was to create an educational environment for Muslims between the age of 15 and 25 who were willing to dedicate four years of their lives to the study of Islam. It has now been reduced to two years.

The objectives of the GII are:

1. To provide an opportunity for Muslim students to receive Islamic knowledge and training.
2. To prepare qualified Islamic workers.
3. To teach Arabic language and grammar so that the students would be able to speak and understand it.
4. To print and publish educational materials that would be beneficial to the wider community⁹.

Subjects taught at the Guyana Islamic Institute include: (1) Qur'anic memorization (Hifz) and recitation (Tilawah and Tajweed) (2) Tafseer and Uloomul Qur'an (3) Uloomul Hadith (4) Fiqh (5) Seerah (6) Arabic Language (7) Islamic movements (8) Comparative religion (9) History (10) English and other vocational subjects¹⁰.

The institute is presently at the Meten Meer Zorg Masjid on the West Coast of Demerara. The operational staff of the institute consists of four full-time teachers and several adjuncts, a caretaker, a secretary/librarian and two chefs. The principal and the Board of governors are responsible for the smooth functioning of the institute.

The full-time teachers are: (1) Shaikh Rauf Zaman (Studied in Pakistan and Egypt) (2) Shaikh Dawood Baksh (Graduate of Islamic University of Madina) (3) Shaikh Abdur Rahman (Graduate of Islamic University of Madina).

Shaikh Abdur Rahman was principal of the Institute in Oct. 1996.

Presently there are students registered in the institute. Five students graduated in 1990. They were the first to complete the full four years. Many of them have since decided to go abroad to further their studies. Due to the infavourable economic situation in Guyana, the Board of Governors of the institute has recently decided to decrease the number of years of study from four to two. This decision was also based on the fact that many parents complained that they could not afford to have their sons away from home for four years. A short distance from the

⁹ A Brochure on Guyana Islamic Institute (Georgetown: Lombard Road, n.d.)

¹⁰ Ibid.

present institute, 24 acres of land was donated by the Hifazatul Islam Organization of Guyana for the construction of a building that will operate as a full time college. It was expected to be completed by March 1995.

There are two long term plans for the institute.

- a) Making the Institute the center of Islamic education for the entire Caribbean and Latin America.
- b) Turning the Institute into the educational wing of the Guyana Islamic Trust.

This means that the institute would be responsible for publications, developing and improving curricula for various Islamic study sessions and the training of Islamic workers¹¹.

The Institute generates funds for operation from local sources in Guyana and the generous donations of Muslims outside the Caribbean region.

Additional training programmes: (These programmes are aimed at improving and developing the character and personality of Muslims)

1. Madrasah and elementary programmes for students of 4 to 15-years old.
2. Halaqaat or study sessions for movement oriented brothers and sisters.
3. Arabic, Tajweed and Islamic studies for the general public.
4. Extended programmes held in various regions across the country.

Sister's Activities

Historically, Muslim women have always played a significant role in shaping and defining the nature of the Muslim community in Guyana. Within the local Masajid they maintained an autonomous body of their own. Under the umbrella of the GIT the sisters operate with a structure similar to that of the brothers, but plan and execute their own educational and tarbiyah programmes. This arrangement allows the sisters the room to define and work for the kind of society they envision for themselves. They regularly organize dress displays, home decorations, bazaars, cultural events, food sales to raise funds and run pre-school classes for children. Thanks

¹¹ My interview with Rauf Zaman.

to the sisters, Muslim women can now wear the "Hijab" to attend public schools. Prior to this they were not allowed to do so¹².

Publications

The GIT publishes a monthly bulletin for its members and the general public. The bulletin is called "As-Silah" or "The Link". Due to the shortage of paper, ink, finance and trained personnel, The Link struggles hard to maintain its monthly deadline. There is no independent Muslim newspaper or bulletin in Guyana and everyone is dependent on the government controlled radio, television and newspapers for information.

In addition, research papers on contemporary issues are prepared and presented on frequent occasions by some competent brothers.

Economic Projects

The GIT is engaged in several short term economic projects. For example, they buy and sell foreign products, local commodities in Guyana, Eid cards and calendars. They also offer the services of two photocopying machines to the general public.

In order to set itself on a firm financial foundation, the GIT is planning to:

- a) Establish a gift shop and service center.
- b) Manufacture oil and gas filters.
- c) Produce Chalk.
- d) Be involved in regional trading.
- e) To setup a Printery.
- f) To start a fruit business

Few years ago, some former members of the GIT had formed a GIT Support Group in North America. The following are some of the activities they have carried out and plan to continue in future:

1. Establish a weekly study session for those interested in learning more about Islam.

¹² The sisters of GIT are shy, introvert and reserved as compared with those of other Islamic Organizations in Guyana. The GIT's sisters, by and large, resemble with the *Wome* Islamic workers of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan in behaviour and work ethics.

2. Occasionally send medical supplies in care of the GIT for distribution to the needy.
3. Constantly send appropriate summer clothes for children and young adults.
4. Regularly send books and office supplies.
5. Execute small projects to raise funds.
6. Sponsor a student at the Guyana Islamic Institute.
7. Financially assist nine full time active workers for the Guyana Islamic Trust.
8. Supply national and international magazines and other relevant reading material for the GIT library.
9. Collect Zakaah and Sadaqatul-Fitr to be sent to Guyana.
10. Support and finance the Tarbiyah camps¹³.

This group is helpful in facilitating the GIT activities during economic crisis and budget deficits. The former members of the GIT are playing leadership role in the Islamic Organizations of North America and Canada. Some of them are associated with the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and others are with the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA).

Objectives and Organizational Structure

The GIT observes a constitution called "GIT constitution". It is not known that when this constitution was adopted. It has 20 articles. The objectives of the GIT according to its constitution are as follows:

1. To disseminate the message of Al-Islam to the people of Guyana.
2. To revive the practices of the Quran and Sunnah in the lives of the Muslims.
3. To organize those who respond to the call of Al-Islam, according to the methodology contained in the constitution.
4. To provide sound, intellectual, spiritual, moral and cultural training to those who respond.

¹³ My interview with Habib ur Rehman, the present Murshid of the GIT on January 2, 1995.

5. To co-operate with individuals and groups locally and abroad, in the promotion of good and forbidding of evil in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah.
6. To support needy or deserving students, scholars or such other persons whose services may be considered conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the Trust (GIT).
7. To do anything that is conducive to the attainment of the objectives¹⁴.

The objectives of the GIT show that it is basically a Da'wah and community oriented organization. Its membership is open for any Muslim¹⁵ but it has categorized the membership on merit basis. The categories are A,B,C, and D.¹⁶

There are seven entitlements of the members. The members are entitled to seek help of the GIT if they need basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, medical attention, shelter, etc. They can also get funeral services from the GIT and if they deserve they ask for Islamic education.¹⁷ These entitlements are very significant and to my knowledge do not exist in the constitutions of other Islamic organizations in the Caribbean. The organizational Structure of the GIT is:

- (1) General Assembly
- (2) Shura
- (3) Administrative Council (A.C.)
- (4) Office
- (5) Murshid
- (6) Zones and Amir

¹⁴ G.I.T. Constitution, Guyana Islamic Trust: 13 A Water Street, Georgetown, n.d. Article 5, p.1.

¹⁵ Ibid., Article 7 (1), p.2

¹⁶ Ibid., Article 7(2), p.2

¹⁷ Ibid., Article 7B (5), (6), (7). p.2

(7) Areas and Naqeebs

(8) Departments and Mudirs ¹⁸

The main body of the GIT is the General Assembly which elects the Shura, the Murshid, the Administrative Council, the Ameers, and the heads of departments. Very prominent in the structure are the Zones which are governed by zonal councils. Each zone is further sub-divided into areas. Each Area is headed by a Naqeeb.¹⁹ The head of the GIT is called "Al-Murshid" who is assisted by a Deputy Murshid. The qualifications of an Al-Murshid, among others, are that he must have served one year in the Administrative Council.²⁰

The nomenclature adopted in the organizational structure is a mixture of the terminologies used by the Ikhwan-al-Muslimoon in Egypt and the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan. The words like Al-Murshid and Naib Murshid, Naqeeb and Mudir are in use in Ikhwan while Ameer, Ijtema and Jamaah are used by the Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan. One may note that female members are not taken into consideration in the General Assembly which has the power to appoint and dismiss the Murshid and all other office bearers.²¹ This 'treatment' to sisters is beyond comprehension. May be they are consulted by some responsible ones but nothing is mentioned about their role in the constitution.

Similarly, the constitution does not mention whether or not the sisters can get the membership in Shura of the GIT. However, in the brochure of the GIT, few lines are written about the Department of Sisters Activities (DSA) which is the women wing of the GIT.²²

¹⁸. Ibid., Article 11, p.3

¹⁹ A Brochure of the GIT, (Guyana: 29 Lombard St. Werk-en-Rust. Georgetown).

²⁰. G.I.T. Constitution, Op.Cit, Article 15 (1) (a), (c), 3(a).

²¹. Ibid., Article 12(A)(1). p.4

²². A Brochure on the GIT, Op.Cit.

However, in the "Handbook for Members", it is mentioned that the female members of the GIT will also be recognized as permanent members. The Handbook further explains that the female members must be fully garbed with proper Hijab and must be in conformity with the GIT's standard of acceptance and tidiness.²³ Male members are also required to exhibit a presentable standard of tidiness with respect to dress, hairstyle and beard cut.²⁴

The GIT runs Lady Khadija Play School. It is a kindergarten school which accepts children of any religion and prepares them for entry into primary schools run by the government. Lady Khadija School teaches Islamic songs, Tajweed, and Islamic morals. It encourages the use of Hijab.²⁵

A distinction of this School is that although it is an Islamic Play School, but over 40% of its students are from the non-Muslim community.²⁶

Financial Position

Funding for projects and programmes are acquired through Zakat contributions, donations from members, sympathizers and through small investments. A meager amount was received up to May 1995, for the GII and the GIT that totals US\$ 200 monthly from the 11FSO.²⁷ The Support Group of the GIT in the North America is the main source of finances for the GIT. In Ramadan, GIT sends its representatives to the U.S. and Canada for fund raising.

²³. Hand Book for Members, Guyana Islamic Trust, Compiled by I.Ali, approved by Administrative Council, (Guyana: Sept. 10, 1993) p.9

²⁴. Ibid.

²⁵. A brochure on GIT, op.cit.

²⁶. As-Silah, "Lady Khadija's First Graduation", Muharram/Safar 1415 AH, Vol. 1:6, p.11.

²⁷. M.K. Hosein, Report on visit to Guyana, October 2-6, 1993, Caribbean Islamic Secretariat, (Trinidad: 1993), p.4

Political Activities

Though an overall impression about GIT is that it is a serious and devoted Islamic organization yet it involves itself, sometimes, in the political pursuits. Study of its documents indicate that the GIT avails the opportunity of making presentations to the government. Among other things, its two well prepared memoranda one presented in February 1990 and the other on 8th February 1993 are noticeable. The one which was presented as GIT's response to the process of national dialogue within the context of consultation by the President with Political and Socio-economic organizations addresses twenty two issues. Those issues which pertain to the Muslim's community are:

Swearing in courts by Holy Books, exemptions for the Muslims from the courts on Friday, holiday on Eid ul Fitr, establishment of Islamic Family Court, provision of halal food by the Guyana Airways Corporation, legislation about Muslim marriages, appointment of Muslim Marriage officers, rights of women and children and ban on indecency and vulgarity.²⁸

Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG)

At the time when some conscious Muslims thought about formation of CIOG, that period was marked by disorganization of Muslim Jamaats and dysfunctioning of Muslim institutions in Guyana.

On the 1st of July 1979, a considerably larger number of Muslims gathered at Bishop's High School Georgetown to finalise the formation of the CIOG by electing its executive members.²⁹

The major aims of the organization included:

- (a) The dissemination and propagation of Islamic Teachings in accordance with the teachings and principles accepted by the Ahle Sunnah Wal Jamaat, and the

²⁸. Memorandum by the GIT, (Guyana: February 1990), pp. 1-2.

²⁹. Muslim News, Ramadan Special, Islamic Research and Propagation Centre, (Georgetown: 65 King Street, April 1991), p.15.

promotion and the welfare of Muslims and the protection of Islamic places of worship and education.

- (b) The safeguarding and promotion of religious, social, educational, economic and other rights of Muslims and the religious, educational, moral and social reform of the Muslims.
- (c) The revival of Islamic teachings and practices and of Arabic and Urdu languages and the spreading of Islamic Education.
- (d) The setting up of institutes for teaching and research in Islamic fields and to provide facilities and services with libraries, reading rooms, bookshops, publishing houses, scholarships for the advancement of Islamic Education.
- (e) The supporting of needy and deserving Muslim students and scholars whose services may be considered conducive to the aims of the organization, whether by way of grants, loans, salaries, scholarships or otherwise.
- (f) The undertaking of the burial of Muslims who may die in miserable circumstances.
- (g) The integration into it of any other Islamic Organization, upon such terms as may be agreed by the General Council etc.³⁰

The CIOG claims that at the time of formation, Muslims from all shades of opinion were consulted. These included the officials of the Masajid, leaders of the-then existing Islamic organizations, influential persons, etc.³¹

Administration of the CIOG

The CIOG, for the purpose of meeting the needs of the Muslims, has divided the country into ten regions. Each region has a regional committee which is made up of a Regional Vice President, Secretary, Nominee and two representatives of each Masjid. Elections are held every

³⁰. Ibid.

³¹ Al-Bayan, official organ of the CIOG, May-June 1995 (Guyana: M.Y.O. Building Georgetown), p. 1

five years. The affairs of CIOG are managed by a Central Executive Council (CEC), which consists of the President, Deputy President, all the Regional Vice Presidents and Regional Nominees, the Treasurer, General Secretary, Assistant Treasurer and ten nominated members.

There is a General Council Meeting every year. The last General Council Meeting was held on the 11th March 1990. Eversince the CIOG has been recommending prominent Muslims to be appointed as Marriage Officers and Justice of the Peace (J.P.)³²

Dr. Sayed I. Hack, Special Assistant to the President of IDB visited Guyana. During discussions on matters with CIOG, he proposed the establishment of eight vocational schools. However, after the relevant documents were sent to the IDB, four were selected. They are No. 73 Masjid, Enmore, Kitty, and Anna Regina. The four centres will cost US\$300,000³³.

The CIOG was further informed by Dr. Hack and the IDB of their scholarship awards in the fields of agriculture, engineering and medicines.

Radio Programmes

The CIOG has managed Islam to the average Muslims in Guyana by special and regular Radio Programmes. It's main contributors are:

- (a) Maulana Siddiq Nasir
- (b) Shaikh Salu Sinah Wahab, Missionary representative, Darul Ifta (Saudi Arabia).
- (c) Ahmad Hamid

The CIOG has delineated a system of education for Muslims. The activities and programmes of its education department include:

- (a) Seminars and workshops
- (b) Maktabas at various Masjids
- (c) Special children programmes every year in July and December
- (d) Printing of workbooks - elementary and intermediate stages.
- (e) National copy writing competition

³². Muslim News, Ramadan Special Op.cit.

³³ Ibid.

- (f) Free distribution of books to Jamaats, individuals and organizations
- (g) Short courses for Islamic workers/teachers etc.

Zakaah

Zakaah has been established as a social, economic and religious obligation for those in possession of the Nisaab in the second year after the Hijra.

The CIOG has considered the poor and needy and the destitute of great importance and this organisation has embarked upon collection and distribution of Zakaat since 1980.³⁴

CIOG also claims to be an Islamic Movement in Guyana. However the G.I.T. looks adamant to its view that there is no other Islamic movement in Guyana except G.I.T. The GIT does not believe that the CIOG is the only representative of the Muslims of Guyana. A substantial argument of CIOG's claim of being the only representative organization is its support of 124 Jamaats whose Imams are the members of the General Council of the CIOG.³⁵

Zakaat is the area of specialization of the CIOG. It has established its credibility in collection and disbursement of Zakaat meting out no discrimination to anyone. In 1979, the CIOG was paying out approximately G\$360,000 compared to G\$ 15 million which was to be paid in 1995/1996 to 850 recipients living in the vicinity of 105 Masjids throughout Guyana. The CIOG, since its inception has produced audited financial statement for public awareness.

The Organization carries out an on-going training programme for Imams, teachers and Islamic workers. It has also conducted several programmes of teaching Arabic. Some special training programmes for sisters have been conducted to improve their Islamic Knowledge.

The CIOG brings out a bi-monthly newsletter called *Al-Bayan* which carries news and views, both. In the area of education, the CIOG has signed a contract with the Islamic

³⁴. Ibid.

³⁵. President of CIOG, Fazeel Feroz's unpublished speech in the closing session of the 17th General Council Meeting of the CIOG on July 2, 1995 at the MYO Building.

Development Bank (IDB) to establish four vocational institutes/schools at four different location in Guyana³⁶.

Publication Programme

The CIOG has published the following books:

- (1) Workbooks Part I & Part II (for children)
- (2) Zakaat
- (3) Eidul Adha and Qurbani (sacrifice)
- (4) Ramadan Supplement
- (5) Selected Khutbas, Part I & Part II.

The CIOG advances loans to students to study: medicines, engineering, agriculture and dentistry at the University of Guyana.

Zakaat House of Kuwait is assisting 50 orphan families in Guyana. This organization has opened "The Kuwaiti Technical Institute for Girls" at the headquarters of the CIOG at the MYO Building. This was opened on March 21, 1996³⁷. This organization has donated five pentium computers, two Inkjet Printers, and nine sewing machines to facilitate the establishment of the Institute. The CIOG's orphan sponsorship Programme was initiated in 1994 when 19 orphans were sponsored by the Zakaat House of Kuwait. Currently the Zakaah House sponsors 90 orphans through the CIOG with a payment of G\$ 2665.00 per month to each orphan.³⁸

Hearse Service

The CIOG secured a vehicle as a gift from the Muslims of New York for use as a hearse. This vehicle is operational and has been providing a good service to the Muslim community.

The CIOG has a ladies Arm-National Committee of Sisters Affairs (NACOSA), which assists in education of sisters by organizing training classes. This arm was added to the CIOG

³⁶. Ibid.

³⁷. The Caribbean Muslim Standard, "Kuwaiti Institute Funds Education in Guyana", issue 07-1996-48, (Trinidad: 20 Springvale Road, Valsayn, July, 1996), p.16

³⁸ Ibid.

in July 1992. The Central Executive Council of NACOSA was formed on October 23, 1993. Sisters from almost all Jamaats in Guyana were invited and election for various offices of the Central Executive Council was conducted in which Sr. Shalimaar was elected as Ameerah and Sr. Zeena Baksh was elected as Secretary.³⁹ The CIOG has earmarked some activities and areas as its future programmes and projects. This plan of action is called Vision 2010 or the "Goal of the Muslim Community/CIOG for the next 15 years", which is briefly as following:

1. Six Months Arabic Language and Islamic Course for Imams, teachers, trainers and Dawah workers.
2. Establishment of the College of Arabic Language and Islamic Studies for the Caribbean and South America.
 - (i) The college is expected to be a Research Centre with all the necessary facilities.
 - (ii) The college will conduct a variety of programmes to meet the needs - Islamic and Academic - of the Community.
3. To focus on the development of the Masjids in terms of human resources and for the Masjids to play a dynamic role in the lives of people in the community.
4. (a) Establishment of a T.V. station. The focus will be on Islamic values, morals, culture and art.
 - (b) To conduct distance education programmes organized by the proposed Islamic College, both Islamic and secular.
5. Education and training of Imams and the establishment of a fund to offer them a monthly stipend.
6. To complete the four vocational schools to be sponsored by IDB, and to establish three additional vocational schools as well as farms to provide training and employment in each county.
7. To establish a printery for the preparation of educational materials for Islamic propagation.

³⁹ Al Bayan, Jan-Feb. 1994, p.9.

8. To present the Muslim manifesto to the Government of Guyana, the opposition and NGOs on the Islamic position on major issues related to socio-economic, religious and political situation in Guyana.
9. To establish an Islamic Bank to promote investment and interest - free banking in Guyana.
10. To work with all organizations to promote racial unity and tolerance among the people of Guyana.
11. To forge a Caribbean unity among the Islamic organizations, leaders and the Muslims generally.⁴⁰

This plan was approved in the 17th General Council Meeting held on July 2, 1995. I am sure that all other plans envisaged in Vision 2010 look feasible but I have reservations about No. 4(a) which relates to establishment of a T.V. Station in Guyana. Establishment of T.V. Station entails employment of not only skilled staff and production teams but also good script writers and motivated workers whose availability with CIOG or among the Guyanese Muslims is presently a dream. Muslims in the U.S. who are more resourceful than Guyanese Muslims have been planning to setup a T.V. channel for the last four years, could not materialize the idea despite availability of required skills, techniques, resources and the manpower.

Moreover, the establishment of an Islamic Bank (No. 9 of Vision 2010) in Guyana looks to be an ambitious plan. The majority of Guyanese Muslims is poor. They have but little savings. Secondly, the banking rules formulated by the Ministry of Finance and Commerce are in contravention with Islamic principles. So, the transactions with other banks will again be a problematic area where the services of experts of Islamic economics will be required. The education standard of the Muslims is not so high. Despite continued efforts, I could not find any qualified person within the fold of CIOG and the GIT who had a master degree in any discipline of either social sciences or natural sciences.

⁴⁰ Vision 2010, a circular of CIOG mailed to all international Islamic Organizations, (Guyana: MYO Building, July 13, 1995),

Guyana United Sadr Islamic Anjuman (GUSIA)

The GUSIA was incorporated in 1961.

This organization operates from the business office of its President Hafeez Rahman son of late Haji Abdul Rahman who passed away on August 25, 1993. The executive of the GUSIA comprises of all the members of the Rahman family. This organization has shrunk its activities to a greater extent. It is running the Shaheeds' Boys and Oliander Girl's orphanages by soliciting Zakaat and other donations. These orphanages house about 80 children.⁴¹

M. K. Hosein relates GUSIA with the ASJA of Trinidad because of its concepts and practices⁴². During the reign of the previous government of Desmond Hoyte, the Anjuman was allowed to submit names of Imams for appointment as marriage officers who otherwise could not have applied themselves. They no longer have this influence⁴³.

Guyana Muslim Mission

This is a small group of African Muslims comprising about 25-30 members. They are impressed by the personality of Imam Warith-ud-Din of Chicago, U.S.A. They also refer to the sayings of the late Malcom-X. They run a Madrassa as an annexe of Masjid Muhammad on Robb Street of Georgetown. I had visited that Masjid on December 26, 1994. The premises of the Masjid was not found very clean. At the time of Salat al Asr, there were about six people excluding three children. I had invited their Ameer to attend the Tarbiyah Camp at the GII but he expressed reservations about the G.I.T.(host) I had learnt from them that they run classes in the Madrassa. I asked, "who teaches at the Madrassa"? "There is one brother who comes irregularly to teach our children about Islam", was the Imam's response. He told me that their nominee for the International Leadership Training Programme held in October, 1993 at

⁴¹ Correspondence between Haji A. H. Rahman, President of GUSIA and myself, letter No. ANJ/5195 dated March 20, 1995.

⁴² M. K. Hosein, Guyana Report, Caribbean Islamic Secretariat, (Trinidad: Oct., 1993), p.4

⁴³ Brief History of Islam - Guyana (GIT, 1993), pp. 15-16.

Islamabad had learnt a lot about Islamabad and later conducted classes of men and women at the Masjid. Salat-al-Jumu'ah is also offered at this Masjid. The Darul Ifta missionary, Sheikh Abdul Wahhab had been conducting regular classes during 1993-94 but later discontinued the classes after finding a packet of drugs on the premises.⁴⁴ It was, of course, a great loss of the Muslim children. The classes must have been continued. Sheikh Abdul Wahhab could teach them about the harmful effects of the drugs.

The Government has officially pledged to the group a parcel of land measuring 164' x 406' to construct their Masjid. Another parcel of land measuring 164' x 204' was intended to be assigned to the Guyana Islamic Mission but later this parcel was reserved to be assigned to an appropriate body for use as a Community Health Centre. This parcel has a frontage on the Mandela Highway of 164'. These are all prime lands in the city of Georgetown. The CIOG had given a support letter to guarantee the funding of the project on the basis of which the government had approved the land.⁴⁵ This group also owns a two storey building on prime lands in the city, suitably located for use as a Da'wah Centre. There are many educated Afro-Guyanese Muslims who were with the G.I.T. in the past but presently have withdrawn themselves but they do not feel comfortable in the Guyana Islamic Mission. The main reason is difference of standard of education as the office bearers and other members of the Mission have very limited knowledge of Islam.

Islamic Missionaries Guild of Guyana

The Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG) operates out of the business office of its President at 99-Regent Street Georgetown. Its major declared objective is education. However, the main activity of this organization is to distribute food packages to the poor on behalf of a charitable organization "Food for the Poor."⁴⁶ Other activity at the office is the occasional marriage

⁴⁴ Guyana Report by M. K. Hosein, Op. Cit. P.5.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Brief History of Islam in Guyana, GIT, unpublished Report, (Georgetown: Lombard Street, 1995), p.15.

registration (not ceremony) done by its General Secretary. It may be noted that the IMG of Guyana is a separate body. It is not related to the IMG of Trinidad.

Berbice Islamic Sunnatul Anjuman (BISA)

The BISA's objectives are to serve the educational and cultural interests of the Muslims in Berbice. About eight years ago, this organization headed by Haji Sultan Hafiz sought to persuade Muslims especially in Berbice to face the proper Qibla for Salah. In 1993, this organization was engaged in calling the Muslims to the International Islamic Calendar based on the 'Imkana Ru'ya' principle.⁴⁷ Haji Sultan Hafiz was at one time an office bearer of the Rabita. He has constructed a complex, with funding from Rabita, and with the purpose of providing coaching, conference and studio facility. These facilities remain unutilized while BISA is more or less reduced to a one man show.⁴⁸

Muslim Youth Organization (MYO)

The MYO was founded in the 1950's in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana. Its first President was a woman.⁴⁹ The MYO served mainly as a social club in its early years. Its significant contribution to Islam in Guyana is its acquisition of a sizeable piece of land in the city where it has constructed a beautiful building. The MYO has co-sponsored several educational and Da'wah courses over the past 15 years. This became possible because several organizations, local and foreign, such as the GIT, CIOG, WAMY and IIFSO were in need to find some suitable venue, chose the MYO building for their courses and programmes. For the past 15 years, the CIOG has been utilizing the MYO building for housing their headquarters, and office - an arrangement that is working smoothly so far because the President of the MYO is also the President of the CIOG. He is Haji Fazeel M. Ferouz.

⁴⁷. Ibid.

⁴⁸. Situation Report on Muslims in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana by the Guyana Islamic Trust (Georgetown: B A Water & Bentick Street, 1993), p.3

⁴⁹. Ibid.

The Jamiat Ulamaideen

This organization is headed by Haji Abdul Razack and has only one other member who is known about Islam i.e., Shaikh Badrudeen. The objective of the Jamiat is to organize, train and represent Imams in the country, but sadly, the Imams hardly know the name of the Jamiat. They are either with the CIOG or the GIT. It has apparently no programme and is busy with nothing at the present.⁵⁰

The Guyana Council of Imams

This is another Muslim organization whose objective is to organize the Imams and to prepare them learn the knowledge of the Quran, Tawheed, Fiqh, Islamic ideology, etc.⁵¹ This also aims to provide the Imams necessary training for correct performance of Nikah and the delivery of Khutbah. The Council has been involved for sometime, in a weekly training course for Imams on the West Coast Demerara area. At present this group is invisible.

The Islamic Research and Propagation Centre

This group's objective is to publish information on Islam and to bring out a newsletter. The group is a good blend of various schools of thought. Presently (August 1996) Muhammad Imran is acting as Director and Nasimul Hussain is Secretary. They are a non-membership organization.⁵² Occasionally, they organize a public lecture and also occasionally publish the "Muslim News". They also plan to publish two new magazines, "Islam Guyana" and "Islam Caribbean" but are short of finances.

Muslim Education Trust College

In 1962, the Muslim Education Trust College was formed as an Islamic educational institution. The purpose was to have an Islamic curriculum as part of the syllabus. When

⁵⁰. Brief History of Islam in Guyana, Op.cit. p. 15.

⁵¹. Ibid. p. 16

⁵². Guyana Report, Op.cit. p.8

schools were nationalized in Guyana in 1976 it was also nationalized and renamed as Brickdam Secondary School.⁵³

MASJIDS, JAMAATS AND MAKTABS IS GUYANA

Study of documents on the indentured Muslims of Guyana reveals that the first Masjid was built at No. 78 village, then a portion of Plantation Springlands, Corentyne, Berbice in the year 1863.⁵⁴ This became possible only by the efforts of Sohabeth, Sobrati, Ishmile (Ismaeel), Seehabdeen (Shahabud-Din), Wajid Ali and Khadim (Mother of messrs Sankar and Dukhi) all of whom were indentured workers. It was through their instrumentality that a piece of land was obtained from the manager of Plantations Springland on which they laid the cornerstone and completed building of a small Masjid made of spars, mud, grass and trash.

Today there are over 133 Masjids⁵⁵, with a Muslim following of over 100,000 which is an indication of the popularity which this religion enjoys without any hinderance in Guyana. From the very beginning, the conscious Muslims did not neglect the question of providing Arabic education to their children so that the children could recite the Quran. With limited financial resources espoused with moral courage and love for Islam, the pioneers took the initiative in establishing Maktab, and Madrassas whenever they found the opportunity to do so. As a result, Islamic knowledge and traditions were carried on to the later generations. It was in the year 1948, through the efforts of the late Moulvi Salim Meagie, Jamhar Ali, Khuda Bukhsh

⁵³. Brief History of Islam in Guyana, p.4

⁵⁴. Haji Nizam Shafiullah's presidential address delivered on June 2, 1991 at the inaugural ceremony of the New Crabwood Creek Sunnatul Masjid, Muslim News Guyana, vol:2, June 1992, p.15.

⁵⁵. Larry Luxner, "Muslims in the Caribbean" in Aramcoworld, (U.S.A: Washington, D.C. 2000, Suite 1200, 1667 K Street, N.W., Nov-Dec. 1987) vol. 38, No.6 p.8

and others who laid the foundations of the Sunnatul Jamaat at Crabwood Creek.⁵⁶ The first Imam to serve in the first Masjid in Crabwood Creek on the voluntary basis was the late M. Mohiuddeen, followed by Moulvi Ibrahim, Haji Ghulam Hussain, Abid Hussain, Muhammad Rasheed, Abdul Wahhab and presently Abid Hussain (since 1991).⁵⁷

The first President was Haji Ramjohn, succeeded by the late Mohiud-deen and now by Haji Nizam Shafiullah who has served in this position for a continued period of two decades. The first trust deed was registered at the Deeds Registry at New Amsterdam, Berbice on February 19, 1952.⁵⁸

Like Crabwood creek Masjid, every Masjid and Jamaat in Guyana has a history. Any person interested in the history of Masjids in Guyana can get the record of Masjids which were registered at the Deed Registry Office at the district courts. The record shows the measurement of the plot size, name of the members of the Masjid Board and dates in which the case was filed and pursued. The most significant Masjids in Guyana are: Crabwood Creek (the first Masjid), Jama Masjid Corentyne, Nure Islam (E.B.B.) Blairmont Jamaat, Enmore Sunnatul Jamaat (ECD), Plaisance Sunnatul Jamaat, Kitty Masjid and Queenstown Jama Masjid. However, Leonora Masjid and Meten Meer Zorg Jamaat are also prominent Masjids. With the establishment of the Masjids at the plantation fields, the Muslims became recognized as a group and were able to make representation to the management of the plantation on their own behalf. In order to sustain and maintain their Islamic identity and their future generations they sent their children to the Masjids for Islamic education. They had inherited this practice from India where they had comparatively better system. As the population grew and as the needs were realized, a separate building was constructed to be used as the Maktab.

⁵⁶. Presidential address of Haji Nizam Shafiullah, Muslim News Guyana, op. cit.

⁵⁷. Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The establishment of the Maktab and the offering of Islamic education assumed dimension towards the end of the 19th century. In the later batches of the Muslims, we found the more educated Muslims who could function as Imam, 'ustads' (teachers) and religious leaders.

Because of the social, economic and geographic location and boundaries demarcated for each estate as well as the powers and authority exercised by the manager, the estates became enclaves. Such conditions afforded the Muslims an opportunity for mutual introduction and understanding. As a small group they could plan for Islamic education of their children.

As mentioned earlier that to almost each Masjid, a Madrassa or Maktab is annexed for the religious education of the Muslim children. Operation of Maktab in Guyana is rather an interesting study. Mr. Ahmad Hamid, the Director Education of the Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG) had once prepared a report on the institution of Maktab, entitled "Problems of Education with Special Reference to the Functioning of the Maktab in Guyana". A summary of this report is presented as following:

1. The Maktab in Guyana was established because the early Muslims thought that it would function as an effective institution of learning. The early Muslims used to call it Madrassa because of the experience of the Muslims who had attended a Madrassah in India which is the high level of education. Time passed and the Madrassah only became a name. It neither kept up to date in its teaching practices or methodology nor provided suitable and enough facilities for the children who attended. In comparison with the schools, it was far below in standard and the Muslim educationists did not pay it the needed attention, nor were they allowed, otherwise.
2. Most of the buildings used as a Maktab are not properly maintained and are in ill-equipped in terms of furniture and other facilities. Most buildings are dull, un-attractive and in some cases badly in need of repair and renovation.
3. In many cases the Imams function as teachers and this is normally expected of them. Only in certain cases based on time availability, nature of work, age and health, another person and not Imam is chosen to act as the teacher at the Maktab. At first the job of teaching at the Maktab was a voluntary one but later the Jamaats decided to offer some sort of remuneration. Such an allowance is not

much and rarely exceeds an amount equivalent to US \$ 10.00 per month. During the days of indentureship the sugar estates had allocated a small sum to pay teachers of the Indian Community (Muslims and Hindu). At Leonora Maktab, the Ustad continues to enjoy this privilege even today. The teachers at the Maktab are of different age groups, academic background as well as levels of Islamic knowledge. The young teachers who have attended the Imam courses organized by the CIOG (o GIT) have been exposed to some amount of teaching methodology. Generally speaking, Ustads had received no formal training for the job and they use methods and techniques according to their experience during their days at the Maktab.

4. Until 1984 there was no syllabus to guide the teachers. Each teacher was free to devise his own way. There was no co-ordination among the teachers in terms of the use of a text and content matter. The attempt to introduce the "Three year Syllabus" introduced by the CIOG in the Maktabs has met with problems to some extent. The syllabus is geared for the 11-14 age group. While the workbooks and questions are patterned according to the common entrance exam. The three year syllabus has the following salient features:
 - (i) If this syllabus is enforced, the Maktab officials will be in a position to know whether the teaching is done or whether the children are learning.
 - (ii) The records kept will give a clear indication of the competency of teachers and work completed over a period of time. Such record will also make work progressive and make a scientific evaluation possible.
5. There are instances when the administration of the Maktab attempted to implement some rules in the Maktab but many ustads resisted those rules and measures. The ustads wanted to be left alone and consider instructions as interference, and sometimes threaten with resignation. Some ustads believe they know enough and nothing new can be taught to them. Others are too afraid that their limited knowledge will be exposed. This is not only the case of the older folks but the younger ones as well.

6. Most of the pupils of the *Maktab* are below 12 years and as young as five years. Classes are usually held after normal school hours, that is, after 3 p.m. and continue till Maghrib time. Classes are held on Monday through Friday.
7. The *Maktab*s have no system of admittance. Throughout the year children are admitted. This is one of the reasons why classification according to age/ability is not possible. The whole *Maktab* is treated as a single class. In some *Maktab*s there is only one teacher who offers individual attention to each child. In this case older students are used as assistants to the teacher to teach the younger children or the beginners.
8. The *Maktab* orientation is not so strong. It does not augment the student to the extent to face the secular atmosphere of the school. There are cases of Muslim Children who deliberately denied their identity as Muslims. Because of the prejudice of the school system, the Muslim children are harassed on account of their Islamic teachings. Such pressures cause them to feel ashamed of their identity and to become very reluctant, or openly refuse to become involved in any form of Islamic activity at school.
9. As soon as the child reaches standard three, there is a shift in attention both by the child and the parents. The concentration now is on his preparation for the common entrance exam. His attendance at the *Maktab* is considered as an impediment to his academic progress in the sense that attending the *Maktab* may cause him to get very low marks at school. Having written the exam, and being awarded the place at a secondary school, the child seldom returns to the *Maktab*. Usually, the very bright children never come back at all.
10. There is a strong verbal message given to the children by parents. The children sense that their parents are more concerned with their academic education. For school, parents care for the dresses of their children but in going to the *Maktab*, no such attention is accorded. Boys reciting the Quran are dressed in short pants, the girls are not properly covered and except for the 'Orni', they are attired in a western fashion. This is usually the influence of the school. What form of

clothes is good for the school is good for the *Maktab*. Also, the children wear 'house clothes' while others are poorly dressed and sometime bare footed. Parents pay full attention to the needs of their child's education in the school but with regard to the *Maktab*, the participation is not of the same degree. They display a different attitude. The interest, zeal and concern for the children's Islamic education are not the same as for the academic achievements. Parents rarely visit the *Maktab* and when they do, it is to make a complaint or to argue with the *ustad*.

11. The parents advance following excuses for not sending their children to the *Maktab*:
 - (i) The *Ustad* beats the children (at school the teachers also beat but they continue to send their children and even beat their children to attend).
 - (ii) The *Maktab* is too far (a distance of less than half mile is considered far) while the school may be miles away and the parents ensure their children get there on time.
12. Like the schools the *Maktabs* also have dropouts. The manner in which the *Maktab* programme is being conducted there is hardly any room for the slow learner. The brighter children receive more attention and are given preference and encouragement. The weak children encounter difficulties and made to feel inferior.

A child who encounters problems at the *Maktab* may adopt the following attitude:

1. Become fearful of attending.
 2. Find excuses for not attending.
 3. Hesitate to come forward for lessons from the *ustad*.
 4. Complain to the parents against the teacher.
 5. Play truant.
13. In most *Maktabs* the teaching is done on an individual basis and learning to read the Holy Quran is very much emphasized. Every parent feels a sense of pride

when his/her child shows some ability in reciting the Holy Quran. In fact this ability is used to measure progress and learning at the *Maktab*. Arabic is not taught as a language. There are three methods used to teach Arabic:

- i) Arabic pronunciation of the character, and use of Arabic terms for the diacritical marks.
- ii) Using Urdu pronunciation for Arabic characters as well as the vowel signs.
- iii) Substituting Latin characters for Arabic letters and vowel signs.

14. Despite the problems facing the *Maktab*, it is still considered an important place for the students to acquire the basic Islamic education. The CIOG has been underscoring the improvement of standard of the *Maktabs*. Some of the steps taken in this direction are:

- (a) Implementing a three year syllabus.
- (b) Special training programmes for *Maktab* teachers.
- (c) Preparing work books for children attending the *Maktab*.
- (d) Special one week programme for *Maktab* children.

The CIOG has also chalked out future plan for reformation of *Maktab* system and its utilization for Dawah and education.⁵⁹

The Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) has also delineated a "Madrasa Programme" which was prepared by its Administrative Council on January 7, 1986. Some of the important objectives of this programme are:

1. To train the students in basic Islamic practices.
2. To provide the students the basis for further development.

⁵⁹. Summarized from the Situation Report on Problems of Education with Special Reference to the Functioning of the *Maktab* in Guyana prepared by CIOG on February 25, 1988.

4. To inculcate love in the minds of the young Muslims for Islamic morals and values.⁶⁰

Understandably, these objectives are very significant but need proper educated and trained manpower, institutional infrastructure and paraphernalia. The GIT has the institution like Guyana Islamic Institute which can organize a course on regular basis for the Imams and teachers to inculcate a spirit in them to realize these high sounding objectives.

The Booklet of the GIT unfolds the general regulations regarding operation of the Madrassah Programme which is as follows:

1. The Madrassah Programme will be divided into four levels for part one and further two levels for part two.
2. Level one will be considered a nursery level.
3. Students will be taught to inculcate Islamic habits and qualities such as greetings, truthfulness, honesty, kindness, respect for elders, etc. They will be discouraged from lying, cheating, cursing, calling each other nicknames, etc.
4. The teacher will ensure that knowledge gained in the levels be followed up with practices and become a habit in the students.
5. Teachers will ensure that their work is properly prepared so that maximum benefits can be achieved.⁶¹

For nursery level (3-5 year children) memorization of few short suras like al Fatiha, al Asr, an-Nas, al Falaq, al Ikhlās, and al Kauthar are made compulsory. For Arabic, memorization and pronunciation of the alphabets, recognition of the letters when mixed together, etc. is included in the syllabus. In addition to this, some Islamic rhymes, du'as and stories are enlisted in the course to be taught to children.

For level two (6-8 years children), the following subjects are taught:

⁶⁰. Madrassa Programme, Guyana Islamic Trust, prepared by the Administrative Council, (Georgetown: 1986), p.1

⁶¹ Ibid.

Al Quran: Memorization of the following chapters: Lahab, An Nasr, Al Kaafiroon, Al Falaq and Al Quraish.

Arabic: Reading and writing the alphabets mixed up, reading the alphabets with Fatha, Kasra and damma.

Islamic phrases like the greetings and its meanings, etc.

Following rhymes are taught at this level:

1. Hush a bye Baby
2. Fatima Fatima !
3. Baby Amina
4. Boys and Girls - it's time to pray
5. Three good boys....

The course for Islamic studies include teaching of the following topics:

1. Memorization of the Shahada and its meaning.
2. Wudu, performing Wudu, du'a after Wudu, things that break Wudu.
3. Who is Allah: God, creator, Good, All learning, All seeing, All knowing....
4. Names of the five daily prayers, five pillars of Islam, five qualities of a Muslim.

The course prescribed for Islamic stories are the Quranic stories like:

Prophet Yusuf, Prophet Yunus (Swallowed by whale), Prophet Musa (Oppression by Pharaoh), Story of Qaroon, etc.

For level three (9-11 years) children standard has been elevated keeping in view the age of the child. But the level of Arabic for this stage is very low. The child of 9 to 11 years is expected to start reading the Quran. The Madrassa Programme of the GIT prescribes the following course for level three which is too basic:

1. The joining of the alphabet in the different parts, beginning, middle, and end.
2. To make words using the three short vowels.
3. To read and write words using the three short vowels.
4. Introducing tanween, fathataan, kasrataan, and dummataan.

5. Reading and writing words using tanween.⁶²

Islamic Studies syllabus for this level includes teaching of the following topics:

1. The meaning of Islam
2. Five un-Islamic qualities (given)
3. Five attributes of Allah (given).
4. What is Istinja?
5. Don'ts in the toilet.
6. Cleaning oneself after urination and stool.
7. Du'a after and before using toilet
8. What is Adhaan?
9. Learning the words of Adhaan.
10. What is Iqaamah and words of Iqaamah

A list of Islamic stories from the book entitled "Life of Muhammad" by A.S. Hashim are given in the course.

Level Four is for the children of 12-13 years old. The syllabus consists of memorization of longer suras of juz 30th of the Quran which are: al Qaari'ah, al'Aadiyaat, al Zilzaal, al Qadr and at Teen.

Teaching of Arabic includes:

1. Reading and writing with long vowels and Qaraa Alif.
2. Reading and writing diphthong.
3. Reading and writing the Sukoon, alif Maksoorah, Hamza with Sukoon and Shaddah.

The course for Islamic Studies for the level four has been prescribed by the GIT as following:

1. Brief explanation of Imaan.
2. The study of the Salaah in the following aspects:
 - (a) Six conditions before Salaah.

⁶². Ibid., p.7

- (b) Memorization, explanation and practice in various actions of Salaah.
- (c) Memorization of all the various recitations in different actions of the Salaah.
- (d) Drilling in the performance of 2, 3 & 4 rakaah of the Salaat.
- (e) Explanation of kinds of Salaah, e.g. Fard al Kifayah, Al'Ain Wajib, Sunnah and Nafl.
- (f) How to join a praying congregation.
- (g) How to perform Sajdah Sahw.
- (h) Brief explanation of the five pillars of Islam.
- (i) Definition, nullification and performance of tayammum and ghusl.

Stories:

Stories in the book "Life of Prophet Muhammad" part two by A.S. Hashim are prescribed. The GIT has provided recommended readings at the end of each level. The appendix given at the end includes time table, terms (first, second, etc.), holidays to be observed, schedule of tests to be conducted and other extra curricular activities of the Madrassah.⁶³

The course/syllabus for the four levels from age three to thirteen looks feasible and applicable. It is not burdensome at all. One thing that is missing in the whole plan is absence of any incentive or motivation for students or teachers for showing the best performance. If suitable scholarships and awards are given to outstanding students, this will not only encourage the students but also excite those intelligent among them who, otherwise, are not willing to attend the Madrassah for one or another reason.

In brief Islamic organizations in Guyana are performing their role quite suitably and efficiently. Particularly, two competitive organizations: CIOG and GIT are building new Islamic Institutions to maximize the involvement of all the segments of Guyanese Muslim society on socio-economic level. Afro-Guyanese Muslims deserve equal opportunities to be afforded so that they can play their requisite role in the mainstream. Muslims need co-operation and co-ordination in their Da'wah activities especially Da'wah to non Muslims. Training programs can

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

be organized jointly for the benefit of imams, new Muslims and the Muslim youth. If GIT considers to revive its Intensive Training Camps (ITCs), it will cater to the better future of the coming generations and to their adherence to Islamic ideals. Presently, Guyana Islamic Institute (GII) is deficient in required qualified staff and equipment. Notwithstanding its weak areas, it possesses potential to serve as a modern madrassa not only for the Guyanese Muslim populace but for the neighbouring Muslim countries as well.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, institutionalization of Dawah work in Guyana has been studied. Two competitive Islamic organizations of Guyana: the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) and the Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG) are found involved in intensive Da'wah work and relief activities. The institutions of jamaat and maktab are more effective in Guyana than in any other part of the Caribbean. How far these institutions have been active and effective in the smaller Muslim communities, this will be discussed in Chapter IX.

CHAPTER IX**ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS IN SMALLER
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES**

In the previous Chapter, Muslim Community of Guyana, which is one of the three biggest Muslim communities of the Caribbean was discussed. In the present chapter, those Muslim Communities will be studied which are though smaller but are, slowly and steadily making progress in the field of establishment of Islamic institutions.

1. BARBADOS

The first set of Muslims came to Barbados with the introduction of African slaves to the Caribbean. After abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century, many Indians were imported as indentured workers to make up the shortage of newly freed African slaves. But the African slaves in Barbados opted to remain on the plantation fields. However, some indentured labourers were brought from Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam but not from India.

In the early 1920s Muslims from Bengal (India), migrated to Barbados after learning about good business prospects in these islands. These early immigrants were mainly farmers in India but soon they became small businessmen after their arrival in Barbados. In 1928, two Gujrati Muslims left from Guyana to Barbados. They met the Bengalis there who were living in two groups, one in Tudor Street and the other in Wellington Street, both in Bridgetown, Barbados. Each Gujrati joined a group and became their Imam. Both of the Gujrati Muslims were Hafiz of the Qur'an. The last Bengali immigrant, by the name of Ali, was Muazzin in the City Mosque until he died in 1990. Immigration of Gujrati Muslims continued until 1966 when the government led by Errol Walton stopped it. But since 1976, when the Labour Party led by the late Tom Adams took power, they allowed foreign spouses to settle in Barbados, thus allowing for the continuation of Gujrati's immigration.

The total number of Muslims in Barbados may be stimated (in 1995) at about 3,000 (1% of the total population). Of this total, about 2,500 Muslims are Gujrati in origin, 300 are

African-Barbadian reverts, 150 are originally from Trinidad and Guyana, and 50 are from various origins including Bengal, Pakistan and Madras (India).¹

At present, there are three mosques in Barbados: two mosques being controlled by the Tablighi Jamaat, and one Islamic Teaching Centre controlled by the Afro-Barbadian brothers. Two Tablighi Jamaat Mosques perform name their "Talim", "Bayan" and "Gasht" (Tablighi visit) programmes while in the Islamic Teaching Centre (ITC) there are Quran classes, Islamic courses, Sister's classes and a children Maktab.²

The first Muslim Organization was established by Ibrahim Degia, Moulana Muhammad Yusuf Sacha and Maulvi Ahmad Saeed Pipranwala (all from Gujrat) under the name of Barbados Muslim Association (BMA)³. Ibrahim Degia remained its President until his death in February, 1968. In 1950, the BMA bought an old house in Sober's Lane and converted it into a temporary mosque. Later, a permanent mosque was built on the site and inaugurated on February, 1957. It was extended in 1988. It is called the City Mosque and the Muslim community living in its surrounding is called City Mosque Jamaat. About half of the Gujratis belong to this Jamaat. Ibrahim Degia was succeeded by Ahmed Suleman Raja, a Gujrati salesman. Presently the Imam is a young scholar, Hafiz Muhammad Ashraf Pipranwala who is respected by the Gujrati Muslim community. Regular prayers are held in this Mosque. I have seen about 60-70 people in Zuhr and Asr prayers and about 150 Muslims in the Tarawih prayer during the month of Ramadan (1995). Usually, no body other than a Tablighi brother is allowed to speak in the Mosque. The daily evening Maktab is attended by 50-60 children. The Jumuah Khutba is delivered in Urdu or Gujrati. Gujrati Muslims invite their resource persons and scholars from India and Pakistan for lecturers and religious guidance.

Another Mosque, Juma Mosque is the largest Mosque of Barbados. It was constructed in 1950 and extended in 1991 to accommodate more than 500 Muslims. Presently, the President

¹ My interview with Suleiman Bulbulia on February 7, 1995.

² My interview with Muhammad Degia on February 8, 1995.

³ M. Ali Kettani, "Muslims in the Caribbean" in Muslims in the American Continent, edited by M. Ali Kettani and A.M.M'Bow, (Paris: Hariri Cultural Foundation), under press, p.24.

of Juma Mosque Jamaat is Dr. Muhammad Yusuf Shafi Nagdee who is also the President of Jamiat-e-Ulama of Barbados (1995). The Imam of this Mosque when I visited it in January, 1995 was Hafiz Abdur Rahman Memi, a graduate of Darul Uloom Dahabel, India. The evening Maktab in the Mosque is attended by 50-60 students. These students learn 'Nazira' and Hifz⁴ (memorization of the Qur'an).

Since 1958, Ibrahim Degia and his son Mohammad Degia started Da'wah among the Afro-Barbadians. As a result of this work six embraced Islam. In 1966, both Degias and two other Barbadian Muslims attended the Conference in Trinidad that established the Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG)⁵. During 1969-1974, Barbados chapter of the IMG started a radio programme on Radio Barbados named as "voice of Islam". A nucleus of three Da'wah workers, namely; Muhammad Degia, Abdus Samad Pandore and Muhammad Said Godriwala was the planner and organizer of this programme⁶. Many Afro-Barbadians embraced Islam as a result of their work including Dawood Abdul Haq (presently in the Bahamas) and the late Muhammad Ali. Both were sent to the Madina University in Saudi Arabia for learning Islam. The first graduated and returned to Barbados in 1977, the second returned in 1974 and died in 1991 because of illness. Dawood Abdul Haq was Ameer and Imam of the Islamic Teaching Centre of Barbados until 1992. In 1993, he left for the Bahamas where he is working as the Imam of the Bahamas Muslim Community. In 1995, the President of the Islamic Teaching Centre was Desmond Sabir, an Afro-Barbadian. The Imam of the Islamic Teaching Centre (ITC) is Suleiman Bulbulia, a Muslim youth respected by Gujrati and Afro-Barbadian Muslims equally. The Islamic Teaching Centre operates as a full-fledged Islamic Centre. It has developed educational and social programmes for Muslim youth (both male and female). The five daily and Friday prayers are held regularly and more than fifty Muslims, are usually present on Fridays.⁷ The ITC has

⁴ My interview with Dr. M. Yusuf Nagdee, President Juma Masjid Jamaat on February 9, 1995.

⁵ M. Ali Kettani, p.25.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. p. 26.

a Da'wah Oriented Training Programme on Saturdays. On Sundays, Qur'an and Arabic language are taught, and two study circles are organized to teach Islam to adults. Sunday classes for children, youth and sisters are regularly conducted.

An ITC editorial committee prepares frequent releases published in the local press, such as "Jesus is not God" and "On the Hijaab". It publishes a weekly column, called "Muslim View", in one of the local Sunday newspapers on Islam and matters relating to Muslims in general. ITC also donates regularly Islamic books to the University of the West Indies libraries.

To keep away the Muslim youth from the un-Islamic behaviour occurring on Carnival weekends (February) of each year, ITC organizes parallel programme for leadership training for both boys and girls, often with the participation of Muslim youth from neighboring Trinidad.

In the socio-economic field, ITC established a multi purpose co-op for Muslims and a Muslim Credit Union. It trains youth and finances them to start them off in business or trade as to protect them against joblessness. It also gets involved in the halal meat business for the entire island, starting a farm to raise poultry and sheep.

The American organization "Mission of Islam" (MI) headed by Louis Farrakhan established a center in 1975 at Roebuck Street in Bridgetown. Its first Ameer was Mohammed Nasser, a businessman. However, it seems that most of the MI members joined ITC and no center was being maintained by them in 1995.⁸

Muslim students at the West Indies University in Barbados have formed "The Muslim Students Movement" (MSM) based in the Cave Hill Campus. MSM are active in spreading Islamic knowledge through publications and lectures. It celebrates Muslim festivals and holds Jumuah prayers regularly on campus. MSM is very effective in creating Islamic awareness in the Muslim youth at the University.

The Barbados Muslim community is blessed with good leadership, committed teachers of Islam and a relatively rich business elite which contributes generously to the Muslim cause.

In 1993, Barbados had 10 qualified male imams, who had graduated from India, and five qualified female 'alimaat. There were 33 hafiz (those who memorized the Qur'an by heart) and six medical doctors.

⁸ Ibid.

The Barbados Muslim community is planning to start a full-time girl's Muslim Secondary School, followed by another for boys. It also acquired land which has been approved to be a Muslim cemetery. It is also planning to increase its Da'wah to the population at large and to establish closer coordination between its three Muslim jamaats.

The Muslim community of Barbados is progressing in the field of education. However, there is a need of co-operation between Afro-Barbadian Muslims and the Gujrati Muslim community. The latter should support not only the deserving Muslims from the Gujrati community but all those who are Muslims and should accommodate the Afro-Barbadian Muslims to the possible extent.

Grenada

Islam reached Grenada with enslaved Africans in the 18th century. The most compact group of African Muslims rebelled and entrenched themselves in a locality called Palmist. They were later defeated and totally exterminated. No traces of this first Islamic presence remains today. The recent presence of Islam is due to an East Indian, Muhammad Yusuf, who came to Grenada in the early 1970s from Trinidad. He started preaching Islam to Grenadines and when about twenty one converts joined him, he established with them the "Islamic Foundation of Grenada" (IFG). The number of Muslim converts grew quickly over 100 and by the end of the 1970s, the government recognized the Muslim community and granted it a piece of land on which it built an Islamic Centre where congregational prayers were held regularly⁹.

The IFG has several economic activities to help the Muslim community, it has established a leather workshop and promotes trade between the Muslims of Grenada and Trinidad, exporting spices, fruits, garden produces and goats¹⁰.

The author has seen a good collection of Islamic books in the office of the IFG which were donated by IIFSO. IIFSO had sponsored a Da'ee named Nyrone Hassan Gonzales of Trinidad to act as Imam and teacher. Most of the Indian brothers were not pleased with his way

⁹ M.Ali Kethani, p.35

¹⁰ Ibid.

of Da'wah. The Muslim community was found bickering about his role in the community. He has been appointed now in St. Lucia to augment the Da'wah work.

The Islamic Foundation has been engaged in organizing Muslim Youth Camps and week-end Islamic schools. Grenadian Muslim youth was sent to the Islamic Universities in Saudi Arabia and Sudan but some of the graduates have not returned to their country. They have, instead settled as Imams in other countries such as the USA.

There is an American Medical School in Grenada, usually attended by more than 20-30 Muslim students hailing from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Syria, Libya and Guyana. They have their Muslim Students Association and organize their activities on week ends and during holidays. I had attended their Iftar Party in February 1995 in which 18 students mostly from Pakistan had participated. They had a library maintained in the room of their President. The library comprised of books written in Egypt, Pakistan and the U.S.A. The Islamic Foundation of Grenada has purchased a new place of Islamic Centre. It is situated in the complex formerly known as Panache, Lance Aux Epines Road, St. Georges. This was previously a luxurious dance hall¹¹. This substantial and impressive property will serve as:

1. Central Mosque of Grenada Caribbean and Pet't Martinique.
2. Islamic Cultural Centre including library and computer facilities.
3. Madrassa for adult education.
4. Venue for regional training of Imams and other training courses.
5. Skill development Centre.¹²

The Centre has been made open after necessary structural changes to suit Islamic activities. When I visited the Centre during Tarawih prayer, I found that only the Muslim men were attending and Muslim women were not seen in the mosque premises. It was because of the fact that the Indian Muslims who constitute the majority in Grenada do not like to bring their women to Mosques. Most of them are Gujarati Muslims.

¹¹ My interview with Imam Nyrone Hassan Gonzales on February 7, 1995.

¹² Omar A. AlShariff, President GII, Media Release, January 30, 1995.

Jamaica

The number of Muslims in Jamaica was around 4,500 in 1995 or 0.18% of the total population. The majority of the Muslims are of Indian origin (about 2,500) but an increasing number are returnees to Islam of African origin, about 2,000.

The first evidence of Islam in Jamaica is with the enslaved Africans brought in by the British in the 16th and 17th centuries to work in the sugar cane plantations. They were mainly Muslims from West Africa from such tribes as Mandigos, Fulas, Ashantis and Caromantis. The conditions of slavery were so harsh and Islam was so much feared, that these first Muslims had their names changed by their masters, their families broken, their children taken away from them, their marriages un-recognized and as a result Islam could not survive in their midst after the first generations. They were forcibly Christianized.

Islam came with the indentured labourers of East India in the mid nineteenth century. The regulations of indentureship were only slightly less cruel than slavery. The Muslims were lured into abandoning their faith and accepting Christianity as only those who became Christian could benefit from better treatment, education and health care. However, those who remained Muslim used to gather secretly for congregational prayers. Thus they kept the Islamic presence in the island in a very low profile until the 1950's when in all appearance Islam was inexistant to the observer.

In 1950's Trinidadian Muslim Students came to study in Jamaica. They found many unorganized East Indian Muslims in Jamaica who had barely any knowledge of Islam. In 1957, they helped them organize in Spanish Town, the "Islamic Association of Jamaica"¹³. The first president was Haji Muhammad Khan, who remained so until his death in September 17, 1973.

Meanwhile, many Jamaicans of African origin were introduced to Islam in England, the US and Canada. Among those who returned to Jamaica formed a branch of "The Nation of Islam in North America" led by Elijah Mohammed of Chicago and named it as "World Community

¹³

M. Ali Kettani, p.6.

of Muslims". They established their Centre in Kingston, the capital and called it the "Islamic Centre of Jamaica"¹⁴.

On September 6, 1981, the two groups recognized the need to unite in an umbrella organization for all Jamaican Muslims. Thus, the "Islamic Council of Jamaica" (ICJ) was born bringing all the Muslims together, whether of African or Indian origin, in one single community. The driving force behind this unity was Abdus-Samad who just had returned back from the US and Naim Khan who had extensive experience in Muslim organization. The constitution of ICJ states that:

1. The Council is the sole representative of the Muslims of Jamaica.
2. The Council coordinates the activities of all the mosques and Muslim communities of Jamaica.
3. It mediates any disputes between groups, or individuals, whenever needed to do so.
4. It strengthens brotherhood and deepens relations between all Muslims.
5. It organizes Muslims and establishes Islamic institutions.

Each Muslim community in the island is represented in ICJ by two representatives. The first president of the ICJ was Farouk Abdul-Majeed, the present one is Mustafa Mohammad. The present Imam and religious adviser to the ICJ is Sheikh Musa Tijani, a Nigerian scholar who arrived in Jamaica in 1989. The headquarters of the ICJ are in Kingston.

The ICJ makes a great effort in bringing back the lost Muslims to Islam and in presenting Islam to non-Muslims, through weekly classes, youth camps, study groups, etc.¹⁵ ICJ also publishes "Al-Nur", a monthly newsletter.

By 1994, there were six organized Muslim communities in Jamaica, all members of ICJ. The following Table gives the names of their mosques, towns, and countries.

The Central Mosque serves the Muslim Community of Kingston and is the ICJ headquarters. It consists of a house bought in 1987 with donations from Jamaica, the Caribbean

¹⁴ M. Ali Kethani, p.7.

¹⁵ My interview with Mustafa Muhammad, the President of ICJ on February 10, 1995.

and the Muslim world. The house includes four rooms, a hall, a kitchen, and two bathrooms. The hall is used as prayer room, two rooms for ladies, one room as a class and the fourth as an office. About fifty people show up in Friday prayers in this mosque which cannot accommodate more. About 15 persons take classes at any time conducted by Imam Musa Tijani.

THE MOSQUES OF JAMAICA

Name of the Mosque	Town	County	Year Founded
Central Mosque	Kingston	Kingston	1987
Mosque Al-Rehman	Spanish Town	St-Catherine	1957
Mosque Hussain	Three Miles River	Westmoreland	1990
Mosque Al-Haqq	Portland Cottage	Clarendon	1992
Mosque An-Nur	Port-Maria	St. Mary	1990
Mosque As-Sabr	Albany	St. Mary	1990

Mosque al-Rahman is in Spanish Town at about 30 km from the Central Mosque. It was established in 1957 to serve the Muslim Community of Spanish Town. The Mosque can accommodate about 75 people., it has two teachers: Talib-ud-Din and Dawud Abdul-Sami. The Muslims in this town have difficulties in attending the Friday prayer, as most of them are workers. This mosque is busiest on Saturdays and Sundays when classes are conducted for the youth.

Mosque Hussain was rebuilt in 1990, replacing an older structure, in the County of Westmoreland near the sea, in the western part of Jamaica, at about 200 km by road from Kingston.

Mosque al-Nur was first built in Port-Marfa with bamboo canes near the shoreline, but it has been destroyed by Hurricane Guilbert. It was then rebuilt with wood in 1990 at a nearby location away from the sea-shore. This Mosque includes a prayer hall and a library. The imam is Mustafa Muwakkil.

Mosque as-Sabr is located at Albany on the Northern shore, at about 60 km from Kingston and twenty minutes drive from Mosque an-Nur. This Mosque is in a wooden area, away from houses. It was an old bamboo structure, but the Muslim Community has rebuilt it with bricks in 1990. The imam is Sulayman Abdul-Haqq, and the president of the Association is Omar Abdul-Salim.

The ICJ has hosted many regional Islamic conferences, such as the "First Caribbean Islamic Conference" held by the "International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations" (IIFSO) in Kingston on March 31 to April 4, 1988.

The Muslim Community of Jamaica is young and increasing fast in number and devotion. The growth is mostly through conversion, and some Jamaicans, such as Dr. Abu Amina Bilal Phillips, became renown Muslim scholar. Some rose to high positions such as the Director of the International Bank of Jamaica. But in general, the Muslim community of Jamaica is financially poor. Nevertheless, Islam in Jamaica has a bright future.

Bahamas

Islam came to the Bahamas with the enslaved Africans. However, its present rebirth is due to the influence of Afro-American converts to Islam.

The first Muslim of the Bahamas was Burhan Saladin (Salahud-Din) who was converted to Islam in the early 1960s through a Muslim, Shaka Khan¹⁶. He did in early 1994 in the U.S. More Bahamians became Muslim in the U.S. through the then known group of the "Lost Found Nation of Islam" of the late Elijah Mohamingd. In 1972, Omar Abu Bakr became Muslim through a brother of Tablighi Jamaat. Omar was offering salat al Dhuhr at the Dock near the beach. The scene of the prayer attracted Mr. Zubair Ali. He asked Mr. Omar about Islam. Mr. Zubair Ali embraced Islam thereafter. In 1973, Mr. Zubair Ali joined hands with Burhan Saladin and opened a temporary Mosque "The Mosque of Allah" in the first floor of a building in Nassau and established in the ground floor the "Islamic Training Centre¹⁷". The purpose was to introduce Islam to the Bahamians. This Mosque could not be retained by the Muslims for economic reasons.

Around 1975, a group of Muslims, including Zubair Ali, Khalil Khan, Faisal Abdur Rahman Hepburn and Syed Kalam ud Din, dentist from India established the first Muslim

¹⁶. Zubair Ali, Kareem, et al, A Situation Report on the Muslims in the Bahamas, an unpublished Report presented in the Fifth Regional Leadership Training Camp for Da'wah Camp held at the Guyana Islamic Institute, WCD, Guyana, held on December 26, 1994 - January 25, 1995. p.3.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Association "Jamaat-ul-Islam". The Jamaat's first Imam was Kamalud Din. It included Muslims from the Bahamas and those of foreign origin like India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Dominica, Barbados and from the African continent. The Jamaat's Amir in 1995 was Faisal Abdur Rahman Hepburn (from the Bahamas) and the Imam was Daud Abdul Haq (from Barbados). The Jamaatul Islam is run by a Shura Council. The Jamaat prefers to be called as the Islamic Movement in the Bahamas. According to an article "Aims and objectives of Jamaat-ul-Islam" published in "The Nassau Guardian" on May 24, 1988, Jamaat seeks to "establish the religion of Islam in its entirety, without any pruning and to mould the totality of human life, its innermost as well as its external aspects and its individual and social conduct, according to Allah's pleasure and Divine guidance¹⁸". In the pursuit of this objective, the JI seems "committed to the adoption of ethical, constructive, peaceful, democratic and constitutional means¹⁹" to achieve its objectives. The JI also declares that "it is not a branch of any international Islamic movement". It follows the Sunni school of thought and in this article, the JI has clarified that "it is not a Shiite group, nor have any relations with the Iranian government²⁰". The objectives as declared by the JI are:

- i) To promote Islam and to build the characters of those who came to the fold of Islam so that they become upholders of testimony to the truth.
- ii) To articulate the need to follow Divine guidance in its totality, while criticizing the pursuit of sensitivity, permissiveness, materialistic philosophy, secular ideas and movements, absolute spiritualism and other un-Islamic benefits and Ideas.
- iii) To introduce Islam to the non-Muslims in its true perspective, so as to remove their doubts and misgivings about Islam and enable them to extend their co-operation in the dissemination of virtues and eradication of vices.

¹⁸ "Aims and Objectives of Jamaat-ul-Islam" of in Jamaat-ul-Islam, a Supplement on the Jamaat in The Nassau Guardian, Tuesday, May 24, 1988, p. 8.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

- iv) To extend a helping hand to the handicapped and the needy and to provide relief to the oppressed and those afflicted by natural calamities irrespective of race, creed, colour or religion.

All these objectives are 'high soundings' but the Muslim community of the Bahamas is very small. The JI is the only Islamic organization which enjoys the trust of all the Muslims of Bahamas; indigenous and immigrants.

In 1982, JI was able to purchase a property for use as an Islamic Centre in Nassau and two acres of land, through a grant of US \$ 100,000.00 from Prince Muhammad Al-Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Salat al Jumuah and five time prayers are held regularly in the Islamic Centre. Classes on Islamic teachings are conducted by a Trinidadian Muslim, Hasan Karimullah. JI plans to build a more adequate Islamic Centre and a full time Islamic school on its plot of land.

Many conversions have been reported during 1994-95 due to Da'wah work conducted by a seasoned da'ee, Dawood Abdul Haq. During 1994-95, Bahamian Muslims sent their children to the Darul uloom Trinidad and to the Guyana Islamic Institute in Guyana to learn Islam and come back to their country to teach and spread Islam²¹. This augurs well with respect to future of Islam in the Bahamas. There is a part time Madrassa conducted on Saturdays for the Islamic orientation of Muslim Children²². On Thursdays, Arabic class is conducted for the Muslim youth. On Fridays, sisters prepare and sell food items after Salat at Jamu'ah. Finances so pooled are donated to the JI for its activities.

Bermuda

There is a widely held belief that Islam was introduced to Bermuda soon after the death of Elijah Muhammad by a splinter group of the Nation of Islam. It is also learnt that there was in the 1930s a family of practicing Muslims, the Mohammeds who came to Bermuda before the Nation of Islam²³. Not much is known about the family roots except that the head of the family

²¹ My interview with Br. Kareem of Bahamas, student at Guyana Islamic Institute on January 5, 1995.

²² Zubair Ali, Kareem, et al. op.cit. p. 6.

²³ Ashamead M. Ali, Islam in Bermuda, an un-published Situation Report, Bermuda Islamic Centre, (Bermuda: Hamilton, June, 1995.), p.1.

was from Sudan who came to Bermuda through the Britishers. One of their grand children, Abdur Raḥim Mohammed was the first Imam of the Muslims on the island, leading the salat al Jum'uah²⁴.

When the followers of the Nation of Islam decided to convert to real Islam around 1975, the number of Muslims increased considerably. They, then took over the control of 'temple of Islam' now known as Mosque Muhammad # 1 which afterwards became affiliated with the American Muslim Mission. In 1980s, a Bermudian, Saleem Abdur Razzaq Talbot who reverted to Islam in the U.S. returned to Bermuda. He founded the Islamic Brotherhood in consultation with some unhappy members of the Mosque Muhammad # 1. The Islamic Brotherhood was incorporated in the laws of Bermuda in 1982. Later in 1990 the Bermuda Muslim Educational Society was also incorporated which entailed authorization of the Society to open a school. Meanwhile, a company called Tawheed International and Trust was also established²⁵ to open a nursery school and a co-operative where Muslims could shop.

When their incorporation were made, the leaders of the Islamic Brotherhood reconsidered to end up differences and join hands with Mosque Muhammad in an effort to strengthen Islam in Bermuda. Some of the members of Islamic Brotherhood differed to follow this course, they broke away and ultimately founded Mosque Medina Jamaat²⁶.

In the late 1980s, Mosque Medina of Bermuda was closed but a few of their members continued under the same name, they hold Salat al Jum'ah at a community hall and receive visitors from other Jamaats, local and from overseas.

In 1992, Ashmead M. Ali an active Da'wah worker joined Mosque Muhammad and was made in charge of a weekly newsletter. He was not much satisfied with pace of work of Mosque Muhammad, so he, in consultation with the former office bearers of Islamic Brotherhood

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Nefzy el Sayyid, Situation Report on Islam in Bermuda, an un-published report presented in Second International Islamic Leadership Training Camp held at Dunga Gali in June 1987, p.2

²⁶ Ashmead M. Ali, op.cit, p.2

founded a new organization entitled 'the Bermuda Islamic Centre'²⁷. Since June 1994, this centre has been holding the salat al Jumu'a in Friendly Society Hall. The centre which had started with six Muslims in 1992, now has 16 members who mainly hail from Pakistan, Indonesia and Morocco. For Salat al Jumu'a the turn out is about 33²⁸. Omar Hasan Kasule reports that the number of Muslims in Bermuda was between 300 to 400 in 1984²⁹ while other reports show a definite number of Muslims i.e. 378³⁰.

The Mosque Muhammad operates under the organization of Imam Warith D. Muhammad of Chicago, U.S.A. They own property to the market value of over U.S. \$5.00 million (in 1995). They also own and operate Sister Clara Muhammad School for elementary students. They have carried out some Daw'ah work by radio and T.V. where pre-recorded Khutbas and speeches of Imam Warith D. Muhammad and other Imams, both local and foreign have been broadcasted. The community has a half an hour radio spot on Sundays with 'Imam Muhammad speaks to Bermuda' which is well received by the general public³¹. The speakers of the Mosque Muhammad # 1 are invited by other denominations and social groups like Bermuda Ministerial Association, The Kiwanis Club and the United Cultural Festival to introduce Islam and explain its various aspects. They also avail of opportunities like publishing their articles in the newspapers. They had a 90 second spot on the radio daily at 12.00 noon starting with the calling of the Adhan. The Mosque building consists of a nursery, a health club, a residential area for Muslims, offices for administration, a hall for prayer and a school, all housed in a four storey building. This building needs a continued maintenance for which fund raising is being organized.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Omar Hasan Kasule, "Muslims in Latin America: A Survey - Part II", in the Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, London. Vol. 5:2, July 1984, p. 465.

³⁰ Ashmead M. Ali. p.3.

³¹ Imam Basim Muwwakil, Brief History of Muslims in Bermuda, an article circulated by Masjid Muhamad 3, Cedar Avenue, Hamilton 5, May 1987, p.1.

There is a weekly dinner on Fridays. Most of the funds are used to upkeep the Sister Clara Muhammad School with an average of 20 students.

Mosque Muhammad # 1 is presently (1995) led by Imam Ameer Shakir. He is the resident imam and teaches part time at the school. He sometimes conducts Fiqh classes. Imam Basim Muwwakil conducts Arabic classes on a regular basis every Sunday.

Bermuda Islamic Centre is the second Islamic organization of the Bermudian Muslims after Mosque Muhammad # 1. Their objective is to plan and execute activities to bring people to Al Islam. They believe in specialized Da'wah work through radio, T.V. newspapers, general public meetings and focusing on specific groups of professionals to convey the message of Islam³². The Bermuda Islamic Centre has little funds that too donated by a single member who is economically well off. The centre is led by Ameer Saleem Abdur Razzaq Talbot who holds a B.Sc. degree. Ashmead Ali conducts classes of Fiqh and Arabic. This Centre keeps liaison with the office of the Rabita in Trinidad headed by Dr. Waffie Muhammad. Mosque Medina is registered as a charitable organization under the charities Act as the Islamic Foundation Trust of Mosque Al Madinah. They do a fairly good spiritual training of their members. Their leaders have declared to follow the 'Amaal of Medina³³'. Mosque Medina is led by Ameer Ismail Ishaq. Most of the Islamic work is done by Dawud Nasir and Abdul Haq who have some knowledge of the Quran and Arabic.

The Muslim community of Bermuda has a great potential of expansion but the disunity and lower level of Muslim's education are the main obstacles in its way.

Dominica

There was a Mosque here during 1987-90 but this was repossessed by the owner in 1991³⁴. Thereafter, a part of the business premises of Br. Muhammad Ash - Shabazz is being used upto now (1995). His two sons are receiving Islamic education at darul Uloom Trinidad

³² Ashmead M. Ali, p.8.

³³ Ashmead M. Ali, p.4.

³⁴ M.K. Hosein, Second Fact Finding Tour of the Caribbean Region - October 17 to November 7, 1991 an unpublished report of the Islamic Missionaries Guild, Islamic Secretariat, (Trinidad: P.O.Box 800), p.4.

who will, hopefully, serve the Muslim Community of Dominica in future. Muslims of Dominica need an Imam of African descent to teach them Islam and organize their activities. There is a privately owned The Ross Medical School owned by an American. Students both Muslims and non-Muslims, come from Pakistan, India, Middle East and other countries. During 1990-91, no Islamic activities were held by them³⁵.

The number of Muslims on the island is about 50³⁶. The Muslim community needs money (US \$ 600) to obtain certificate of title to a 3,000 sq. ft. parcel of land to be used for salat, lectures, library, etc.

St. Maartin

This Muslim community comprises of about 75 Muslims chiefly of Palestinian origin but also with a fair number of Africans and Indian. The first Mosque here is now completed. Mr. Abdul Suid (sic), a Palestinian philanthropist resident in St. Thomas donated 80% of the cost of construction of US \$ 200,000.00³⁷ Prominent Da'wah worker, Imam Muhammad Mansour is organizing Islamic activities for this smaller community of Muslims. Mr. Abdullah Hosein has also contributed towards the Mosque project by offering his services in constructing the Mosque as well as donated 1/3 of the cost of land valued at US \$ 52,000.00. The Muslim community has been demanding a suitably qualified Imam³⁸.

Though the community has been able to construct a lonely Mosque which they maintain with a great care but people assemble weekly for the Jumu'ah prayer and daily for Isha prayer. No one has time to conduct any class or to plan any Da'wah activity³⁹. At present, no provision has been made for the sisters, to attend the Mosque as there is a divided opinion on this matter. There is no library available with Islamic literature and the community has been demanding from

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Muntaz Ali, Report on visit to the islands of the Caribbean - 5th - 9th June, 1993. Caribbean Islamic Secretariat, Trinidad, p.8

³⁷ M.K. Hosein, p.8.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Muntaz Ali, op.cit. p.12.

various international Islamic organizations for donation of books⁴⁰. They also need copies of the Quran.

St. Lucia

The registration papers of the Islamic Society of St. Lucia were filed with the administration in 1991. The members of the Muslim community usually play a low key. The organization had requested IIFSO to donate the required grant to cover the registration fee which was donated in June 1993, but the organization could not be registered⁴¹. Presently, Hasan Nyrone Gonzalez, a Trinidadian Muslim, previously an Imam in Grenada has been assigned to work as Imam and Da'wah worker in St. Lucia. The Sparton Medical School in St. Lucia accommodates 110 students. In 1990-91, there were 38 Muslim students from Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran. These students have allocated one room in the hostel for prayers, Salat-al-Jumu'ah and other Islamic activities⁴². The number of active Muslims is around five.

British Virgin Island (Tortola)

This community comprises of about 50 Muslims. There is an Imam and a six member Board of Trustees. The community has been registered with government under the company's ordinance as the "Islamic Society of the BVI"⁴³.

They have rented adequate quarters from which they operate their Mosque and library. The building is centrally located and consists of a prayer and meeting hall, wash room facility and two rooms - one for the library and the other for living quarter for the full time teacher. There is a small library with about 40 books. The library is short of suitable Islamic literature.

During 1990-91, there was no Islamic activity taking place even *salat al-Jumu'ah* was not performed⁴⁴. But now *salat-al-Jumu'ah* is conducted at the Centre regularly and the facility is opened only on Saturdays to the public. No Da'wah activity takes place presently. Sisters are

⁴⁰ Muntaz Ali, p.12.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.7.

⁴² Ibid., p. 9.

⁴³ Muntaz Ali, op.cit. p.13.

⁴⁴ M.K. Hosein, op.cit. p.10.

not being accommodated presently for prayers but they are not against accommodating them in future⁴⁵.

US Virgin Islands (St. Croix)

The Mosque which was severely damaged on September 17, 1989 by a hurricane has been fully renovated⁴⁶. The pace of Islamic activities was very slow in 1990-92 but now (1995) the activities have been spurred up by a Sudanese Imam Mr. Tayyab. In St-Croix, there is a fairly large Muslim community consisting of Arabs, Africans and a few Indians. Sisters also attend the Mosque. The land upon which the Mosque is built comprises approximately two areas. So there is sufficient room for further development. Imam Tayyab conducts adult classes while Mrs. Iqbal Ahmad conducts classes for children. Presently, there is no significant Da'wah program in operation⁴⁷.

US Virgin Islands (St. Thomas)

No significant Islamic activity is being carried out presently (1995) . The Sunday School that was attended by over 50 Muslim children in 1989-90 has been closed in July 1991. Previous Imam, Mr. Khalid Nader a local returnee to Islam has resigned because of his grievances with some members of the Muslim community. The Muslim community is now being led by a pharmacist of Indian origin, Mirza Shakir Baig. He has organized the community as "Mosque an-Nur Muslim Community". The temporary Mosque started in a top floor apartment rented at a cost of US \$ 9,600 per year. It was then removed to a rent-free building. By the end of 1993, the Muslim community bought a piece of land for US \$ 163,000 to construct its own Mosque. The *salat al-Jumu'ah* is attended by about 20 Muslims⁴⁸.

The name of the Mosque is Mosque Anur⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ Muntaz Ali, op.cit.p.13.

⁴⁶ M.K. Hosen, op.cit. p.10.

⁴⁷ Muntaz Ali, op.cit.,p.11.

⁴⁸ M. Ali Kettani, pp 16-17.

⁴⁹ Torch of Islam, "Directory of Principal Co-ordinating Muslim Communities in the Caribbean, IMG, (Trinidad: Port of Spain 1988), Issue of April-May 1988, p.12.

Montserrat

The Muslim community called the "Islamic Society of Montserrat" has acquired suitable premises in Plymouth (the capital) where they have started their activities. They plan to set-up an Islamic Centre and a library rich in Islamic literature.

The community comprises only about five brothers⁵⁰ and so they are unable to have their organization registered, since a minimum of ten members is required for registration.

Mr. Jamal Jeffers and Mr. Karney Osbourne are engaged in Da'wah work and are hopeful to get the required number of Muslims through conversion⁵¹.

Antigua & Barbuda

The number of Muslims in Antigua and Barbuda is very small. These Muslims are under various types of influences but these influences could be subdued by a proper leadership. Previously Ms. Saira Derrick was actively doing Islamic work but she has left Antigua to join her husband abroad. Now, the community is being led by Mr. Abdur Rahman and his wife Ms. Tahira.

Salat-al-Jumu'ah is conducted by a Guyanese brother which is attended by approximately 10 people. Sister Tahira conducts classes for sisters on Thursdays and Sundays in Arabic and general Islamic Studies. The Muslim community needs to be organized into a properly constituted body. They should get their organization registered with the government. They should organize classes for adults and children as well.

Belize

The Belizean Muslim community is small but united. The total number of indigenous Muslims is about 100. There is an equal number of Muslims from the Middle east and India. The Ameer is Ishmael Oman Shabazz and the Imam is Kalim El Amin.

⁵⁰ Muntaz Ali, op.cit.p.9.

⁵¹ Ibid.

In 1978, the Belize Muslim community was officially incorporated and recognized by the government as the Islamic Mission of Belize (IMB). The educational activities of the Belize Muslim community comprised a Kindergarten, primary education for Muslim children during the day, and Islamic education for adults at night. In 1975, it opened a new Muslim school in Belize City as a private institution. In 1979, this school was recognized by the government which pays for the salaries of three teachers.

The Islamic Mission of Belize has built its mosque, the first in Belize. Friday and daily prayers are held regularly. The IMB has a weekly Islamic radio programme which is very popular. Islamic congregations are held in the villages to attract the villagers to Islam.

However, this Muslim community is very progressive and its future looks bright.

Conclusion

Islam in these smaller Muslim communities is growing stronger periodically. These tiny Muslim communities have established contacts with the international organizations which cater to their needs in the field of education, training and Islamic literature. During the last two decades, a considerable number of Islamic institutions have been established. It is also encouraging that the number of Muslims is increasing everywhere in these communities through conversion and continuous emigration from the north.

CHAPTER X**REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS**

There are two regional and two international organizations which are found active in the Caribbean region. These are (1) Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG) (2) Association of Islamic Communities of the Caribbean and Latin America (AICCLA) (3) Rabital al Alam al Islami and (4) International Islamic Federation of Students Organizations (IIFO).

Islamic Missionaries Guild (IG) has been described in the chapter on Trinidad and rest of the theme will be dealt within this chapter.

AICCLA

The Caribbean has been experiencing an Islamic revival in the recent years. With the increase in Da'wah work and Islamic activities throughout the region, some conscious Islamic workers felt the need to establish a body to coordinate the activities and to bring all the various communities scattered throughout the Caribbean and Latin America together in a bond of an Organization.

A number of individuals and groups made attempts to satisfy this need but with little success. Some Da'wah workers worked hard and were able to form an organization, "The Caribbean Islamic Trust" in 1980.¹

As the membership of the body grew and with further developments, the body took a more definite and decisive shape. This necessitated a change of name and drafting of some principles and procedure to make the body more effective. As a result, the name of the body was changed to "The Association of Islamic Communities of the Caribbean and Latin America (AICCLA)."²

The main objective of the AICCLA is to advance the cause of Islam and serve the

¹ A Brochure on Association of Islamic Communities of the Caribbean & Latin America (AICCLA), Pundit street, Elscorro Road, San Juan, Trinidad.

² Ibid.

Muslims in the Caribbean so as to enable them to adopt Islam as a complete way of life.³

This organization which was formed in 1982 was a representative body drawn from the organized communities in the Bahamas, Belize, Bermuda, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Surinam, St. Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago.⁴ The purpose to establish this organization was to:

1. Be a representative body for Muslims in the region.
2. Assist in co-ordinating the activities and overall Islamic work.
3. Provide a forum for exchange of information, sharing experiences and initiating dialogue for the advancement of all.
4. Evolve and coordinate common Islamic programmes in all areas; educational, social and economic.
5. Be a means of developing regional Islamic institutions.
6. Be a link in establishing contact with the Muslim world, international Organizations and concerned individuals.⁵

According to Mirza Ali Muhammad, a former co-ordinator of AICCLA, "it is a framework for exchanging information, developing education and training programmes and promoting social and economic institutions at a grass root level".⁶

The organizational structure of the AICCLA is as follows:

- i) Coordinating and Administrative Committee (C.A.C.)
- ii) Secretariat
- iii) Islamic institutions
- iv) Committees.

The representatives of the Communities in the Caribbean and Latin America constitute

³ Ibid.

⁴ Abdullah Hakim Quick, Deeper Roots p.41.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ My interview with Mirza Ali Mohammad on February, 1995.

the Regional Council. Each country is allowed one representative who is selected by the local Member Body.

Coordinating and Administrative Committee comprises of the coordinator, a treasurer, a secretary, two appointed members and sub-regional coordinators.

The Secretariat comprises of the coordinator and the secretary and a staff. It conducts the day-to-day operation of AICCLA and assists the C.A.C. in planning and conducting all activities of AICCLA.⁷ The first meeting of the C.A.C. of the AICCLA was held in Barbados while the second one was held in Trinidad on September 16-18, 1988.⁸

The AICCLA has become a dormant organization now. The last meeting of the AICCLA's C.A.C. was held in January 1995 at Georgetown, Guyana, which was attended by the representatives of the Islamic Organizations from Trinidad, Guyana, Barbados, Surinam and Jamaica. The meeting was chaired by Br. Mirza Ali Mohammad. The meeting was not able to solve financial and coordination problems. AICCLA brings out "AICCLA News" and AICCLA Papers on various occasions. The booklet, "Deeper Roots" by Abdullah Hakim Quick which is related to the Caribbean history and sheds light on the European 'cover up' of the early history of the Americas. The story of the Muslim's presence is told through slavery and indentureship and is brought up-to-date as Muslims begin to put down new and deeper roots in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

The Muslim World League

The Muslim World League or Al Rabita al Alam Al Islami is an international non-governmental organization with international representation. The branch in Trinidad under the leadership of Dr. Waffie Muhammad is just one of the twenty-seven branches whose Secretariat General is based in the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Rabita has consultative status in

⁷ A brochure on AICCLA, op. cit.

⁸ AICCLAS letter to Member bodies which refers to Agenda items of the Second C.A.C. meeting.

ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council of the United Nations) and is an observer member in (UUNESCO, UNICEF and OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference)).

Rabita in the Caribbean endeavours to fulfill the same functions as all the Muslim World League branches which can be summarised as follows: educating people in Islam, refuting anti-Islamic allegations, whatever is Islamically incorrect and promoting Islamic concerns. It acknowledges all four Islamic schools of thought since it must, being an international organization, yet does not promote any particular one school of thought.

Rabitah in Trinidad is specifically oriented towards educating Muslims about Islam with a keenness to bringing Muslims together. Rather than forming a strong singular organization which would perhaps add to the power struggle and as such would spell division within the Ummah, Rabitah prefers to work through existing organizations. The Muslim World League here however professes not to get itself involved within the problems of other organizations, and works in the background to promote Islam and unite Muslims.

Ensuring that the government has a better understanding of Islam is also a priority for Rabitah. Maintaining good relations with the governments help in the preservation of Islam and ensures better facilities and thus welfare for Muslims. This fostering of good relations creates a forum for solving problems from a different point of view since dialogue is encouraged between Muslims and the government instead of force.

The Rabitah's Da'wah work is quite extensive. Refresher courses for imams have been conducted, qualified Imams have been placed into Masjids, conferences for all Islamic organizations have been hosted as well as public lectures and seminars. Rabitah is responsible for the distribution of copies of the Holy Qurr'an nationwide and produces and circulates vast publications. Rabitah provides Muslims with financial grants for constructing and maintaining schools and salaries are paid to missionaries.

The Rabitah had convened a Conference of Muslim Organizations and Societies of the Caribbean in 1988 in the Hilton Trinidad, in the aftermath, a new co-ordinating Muslim body of twelve organizations, the United Islamic Organizations (U.I.O.) was established. Now, with the winding up of IIFSO's, operations in the Caribbean, the Rabitah has been left as the only international organization in the field.

International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO)

International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO) or popularly known as IIFSO has been operative in the Americas especially in the Caribbean region from the mid 1980s. IIFSO has organized a conference in Jamaica which was held on March 31-April 5, 1988. Its role in the region was to support, encourage and stand behind the efforts of the Da'wah Workers. IIFSO had planned a number of training and orientation programmes for the Muslims of the Caribbean to be organized in 1988 and afterward which are as follows:

1. Islamic Leadership Training Programme(ILTP) for Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad.
2. Da'wah Programme on Radio for Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica.
3. Revolving Credit Fund for Belize, Guyana and Jamaica.
4. Establishment of Islamic Bookshops in Guyana and Trinidad.
5. Sister's Training Programmes in Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad.

As for as distribution of Islamic literature and support of Islamic workers is concerned, all the Muslim communities of the Caribbean benefitted from their services.⁹ Most of the above mentioned programmes could not be implemented but many institutions and workers were however founded and mobilized for Da'wah work. The IIFSO operated through the Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and South America (IMG) in the region. Later, in March 1993, IIFSO made the Caribbean Islamic Secretariat (CIS) as the representative of the Central Office in the United States co-ordinating IIFSO activities in the Caribbean. Dr. Omer Hasan Kasule, the IIFSO's representative to the Americas and the Caribbean in a circular addressed to all the Islamic organizations on March 10, 1993 wrote:

"We have for long been enjoying an excellent working relationship with all the Islamic Organizations in the Caribbean and I do feel that it is very much essential to take every step

⁹ IIFSO's letter from its Regional Office for the American issued on March 7, 1988 from its office in Washington, D.C.

necessary to ensure the continuity of such relationship".¹⁰

IIFSO has discontinued its activities in the Caribbean in 1995 mainly because of financial problems.¹¹ These financial problems arose in the aftermath of the Gulf Crisis. Withdrawal of IIFSO's support has caused serious financial problems to Islamic Organizations which have been depending largely on IIFSO. IIFSO has been a moving spirit behind many Islamic Organizations in the Caribbean and has played significant role in strengthening Islamic work not only in the English speaking territories but Spanish speaking Islands have also derived a bigger support in organizing Islamic work from IIFSO.¹²

Some of the significant activities recorded in the early 1990's are summerized as following:

1. IIFSO had donated to reference libraries in the Unit territories of the Caribbean through the Islamic Secretariat in Port of Spain. It also donated Islamic Books to public libraries in the region.
2. IIFSO has issued a grant of US\$1500.00 to effect urgent renovations to the Islamic Teaching centre in Barbados. This Centre has been receiving sets of Islamic books and videos donated by IIFSO.
3. A loan of US\$1000.00 has been given by IIFSO to the Islamic Foundation in Grenada to setup a Lobster industry. IIFSO has been sponsoring the Imam in Grenada till it decided to wind up its work in the Caribbean in 1995.
4. A leadership Training Programme was conducted in January 1990 to impart information on planning and educating to the participants. Dr. Omar H. Kasule conducted the programme in collaboration with the Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG) in the MYO building. A donation of Islamic books, videos and

¹⁰ Caribbean Muslim Standard Trinidad, issue 05, 1993, p.15.

¹¹ My interview with Dr. Omr H. Kasule in October 1995 at Islamabad.

¹² The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, (New York: Newyork Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), Vol-2, p.208.

- a Gestetner machine was made to the host organization.
5. In Jamaica, Shaikh Musa Tijani of Ghana was deputed and sponsored to promote Islamic Da'wah there. A Leadership Programme was also conducted by Dr. Omer H. Kasule which was attended by renown resource persons from the Caribbean region.
 6. A Leadership Training Programme was organized in Newyork by the IIFSO representative, Dr. Omer H. Kasule on December 28, 1990 which was attended by about 35 participants, mostly Muslims from the Caribbean now residing in the United States.¹³
 7. IIFSO has been assisting the Islamic Secretariat in Port of Spain in Ci-ordinating the Islamic Work in the Caribbean region. It has been assisting in organizing leadership training programmes as well as the IMG's school. Shaikh Ahmad Tijoni of Ghana was also sponsored by IIFSO. Da'wah Academy of International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan had organized a Regional Leadership Training Camp in Trinidad in collaboration with IIFSO and the IMG in 1990. This Camp was attended by 35 participants from Belize, Barbados, Grenada, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad. In March 1991, IIFSO had organized a Leadership Training Programme on Training, Planning, Education and Development. This programme was attended by the leaders of the Muslim Community of Trinidad. In 1994, IIFSO had conducted a Leadership Training Course which focused on planning of Islamic work in the Caribbean.
 8. IIFSO has sponsored students of the Muslim communities of Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad to study in the Darul Uloom of Trinidad and the Islamic Universities in Saudi Arabia.

Islamic work in the Caribbean has received a serious setback by withdrawal of IIFSO from the region. The Caribbean Islamic Secretaries (CIS) instituted by IIFSO to help in Islamic

¹³ Toureh of Islam, Organ of the Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and Sout America, (Trinidad: Port of Spain, March 1990), p.17

work has been left helpless. Many projects-in-hand will remain incomplete until some foreign organization comes to fill in the gap. IIFSO has not been able to provide any funds to the CIS from January 1, 1996. This has made it very difficult for the CIS to maintain there activities especially the projects of financing the Imams and Du'aat employed to work in different Islands.¹⁴

Da'wah Academy of International Islamic University , Islamabad and Darul Ifta Saudi Arabia are also visible on the Caribbean scene. The Da'wah Academy has organized two Regional Leadership Training Program, one in Trinidad in 1991 and the other in Guyana in 1994-1995. Each program was of one month duration. About 20 Muslim leaders and new Muslims have also attended the Academy's training program in Islamabad. Darul Ifta Missionaries are active in Trinidad, Guyana, and Surinam. They live in the Muslim communities and involve in Da'wah and training of the Muslim communities. They conduct Qur'an classes and Arabic classes for both the genders.

Conclusion

Regional and International Islamic organizations have been active in the Caribbean since eighties. They have sponsored many Da'wah and training programs. It is disappointing to note that most of these organizations have gone to dormancy or withdrawing from the Caribbean leaving the perennial projects unfinished. This necessitates emergence of new regional and international organizations to fill in the gap.

¹⁴ My correspondence with the CIS in July, 1996.

Part Four

**STRATEGY
FOR
DAWAH WORK**

CHAPTER XI

STRATEGY FOR DA'WAH WORK

During the last two decades, there has been a phenomenal growth of the Muslim communities in the Caribbean. These have not only expanded numerically but also socially, culturally and politically. These communities have been actively building institutions which reflect their concern and creative genius and affirm their healthy growth.

In this chapter a variety of subjects related to Islamic work in the region under study will be discussed underscoring the need of effective and effectual Da'wah work through various ways and means. Problems hindering Da'wah work, like ethnicity, racism and non co-operation have also been identified.

FUNCTION AND ROLE OF MOSQUES, IMAMS AND JAMAATS

Mosques and their Functions

A mosque has great importance in an Islamic Society. It serves as a multipurpose place for the Muslims.

The mosque has been recognized as the distinctive symbol of Islam and institution of social welfare even from the very beginning of the Islamic society. The basic philosophy behind the mosque was to make people assemble at a common place for a lofty purpose. It served as the focal point where religious and social activities of the Muslims' life were beautifully combined. It was used for solving the worldly problems in addition to the worship of Allah. It had been the centre for guidance, welfare, propagation of Islam and refuge-both spiritual and temporal. The caravans were despatched from the doors of mosque. It was not only a place of divine illumination but a fountain of direction and perception. It was the hub of all social, political and cultural activities- and also for ceremonies and social functions. Even the wedding ceremonies were held and business transactions were finalised in the mosque.¹

¹ Muhammad Saddique Qureshi, The role of Mosque in Islam (Lahore: Publishers United (Pvt) limited, 176 Anarkali, 1989), 1st Edition, p.2.

Present Role of Mosque in the Caribbean:

The historical record shows that during 1860s construction of mosques started in Guyana on the sugar plantation by the Muslims who came from India as indentured labourers. This was the first Islamic institution which was established to further strengthen Islam in the islands. While the mosque was built specifically as a place to offer prayer (Salah) it served other purposes like settling disputes and grievances, administering justice, observing religious events serving as for education of adults and children. Meanwhile mosques were established in Trinidad in late 1890s to serve mainly as venue for prayers. As soon as the Muslim population grew numerically, their needs became more diversified and necessitated establishment of other necessary institutions like madrassas to offer Islamic education, small maktabas for Quraanic education of children, a place to hold meetings of the jamaats and to observe certain religious days and occasions.

Gradually the concept of the mosque changed and it was reduced to a place for performance of Salah only. The activities which were carried out in the mosque were related to Islamic calendar. There observance included Ashura, Yaumun Nabi(Eid Milad un Nabi) , Lailatul Meiraj, Salaat al Tarawih, 'Itikaf, Iftar, etc.

The Caribbean society following in the footsteps of the western society has become more complex than before. There is a demand and urgency to organize the Muslims and to centre their activities around the mosque . The mosque now has been made unable to play its dynamic role. Those in office have too many biases as well as those in leadership positions. They are unable to manage the affairs in such a way as to provide for the needs of the Muslim society."The fault is not with the mosque; the fault is with those whom we have placed in office to manage our affairs."²

For the mosque to become more functional and play an influential role in the lives of the Muslims, there must be trained, educated and committed Muslims in office.

² A. Hamid, " The Problems of the Caribbean Region relating to the Role of the Masjid," an unpublished paper presented in HFSO Leadership Training Programme held at Darul Uloom Trinidad on August 1, 1994.

The mosque administration should be aware of the mainstream of human activities and the societal influences which negatively affect the Muslims. The leaders must be realistic because of the dysfunctioning of the mosque. Muslims in general look elsewhere for guidance and recreation and in the process weaken their faith.

In some territories of the Caribbean, the poor conditions of mosques and facilities are indicative of the quality of leadership and the Islamic consciousness of the Muslim community living in their surroundings. What reasons and excuses can be offered for the following :

- i) Mosque being in a state of disrepair.
- ii) Mosque being closed and in some cases opened for Jumuah or no Jumuah is offered.
- iii) Physical battles within the mosque or in the compound and in full view of the public.
- iv) Constant arguments and disagreements
- v) two Imams conducting the same salaah at the same time in the same mosque.
- vi) Imam manhandled, removed or forced to resign.
- vii) Mosque officials engaged in court litigations.³

The list can go on. The Muslim leadership should come to grips with the issues and incidents that negatively affect the Muslims in a devastating manner. What does the future hold for Muslims in such situations.

The mosque must take cognisance of the needs of its membership and jamaats, aged, adults, youths, women and children. Therefore there must be among other things:-

- i) provision of recreational facilities(indoor and outdoor) and inter jamaat competitive events.
- ii) educational and dawah programmes for all age groups-formal classes, video shows, lectures, health clinics, reading materials .
- iii) guidance and counselling bureau
- iv) fund raising activities
- v) catering for the poor and needy, the sick and those in distress.

³

Ibid.

- vi) organizing the youths and sisters activities.
- vii) funeral arrangements
- viii) training of prospective brothers to be suitable replacement for the Imams

The mosque is an independent unit and should be in a position to plan and execute its own programmes. Planned and organized activities give life and energy to the mosque. Human beings are not robots. we deceive ourselves if we feel that merely to quote Quran and a Hadith will influence and change lives of people.

For the mosque to be highly functional, it must be a part of the lives of the Muslims both physical and spiritual. This is not a new concept. The mosque cannot operate in isolation of other mosques and organizations. There must be constant contact, meetings, discussions, interaction and the execution of plans to meet the needs of the Muslims.

THE ROLE OF THE IMAM IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Imam means leader. Is he the leader of prayer or one who exercises an overall authority on matters related to the Muslim community? In the Caribbean context, during the drop of indentureship and until the 1940s the Imam was the head (Ameer) of his Jamaat. However with a periodical de-emphasis on the acquisition of Islamic education and the importance of acquiring an academic form of education, there was a shift in the balance of power within the mosque.

Record shows that the first set of imams, were indentured labourer, in Guyana and Trinidad. Some of them, if not all, had Islamic education in India. A few of them had memorized the Quran. Most of them had memorized more than ten *suras* of the last part of the Quran. But unfortunately the Islamic education and knowledge of succeeding Imams decreased considerably. Just look at one region in Guyana that has 20 mosques in a twenty mile stretch running in a straight line. In this region, eight Imams are over 60 years, three Imams are over 50, two Imams have secondary education, three Imams are graduates of a University, 15 Imams have primary education only, 17 can be categorized as having an elementary Islamic education. Only six Imams can write and prepare their own Khutbah⁴.

⁴ A. Hamid, op. cit.

This survey portrays a gloomy picture but explains the reality of an aggravating situation. Migration has contributed to this situation since the more qualified Imams are in North America. The problem is to find suitable replacements.

Another factor which discourages qualified or prospective Muslims to assume the responsibility is the western pattern of Mosque's administration. As the Muslims increase their involvement in public life, they imbibe the Western system. There are elections, presidents, executive members, trustees, boards of governors, committees, etc. The Imams willingly or unwillingly have to withdraw from their authority and powers to the elected office-bearers. The mosque or the jamaat then experiences a dual system of control and the sharing of powers between the Imam and the elected body. This sometime results in continuous tension between the elected bodies and the 'Imam's group'. Because of this dual system, the Imams have not been able to play an important role. The Imams encounter severe limitations to play their role and carry out responsibilities entrusted to them. It is clear that all the responsibilities related to the mosque cannot be entrusted to the Imam. For example, managing assets worth millions of dollars cannot be left to the Imam only. Because of death of qualified Imams in the Caribbean, a strict criterion cannot be enforced while recruiting Imams. sometimes, an ordinary Muslim is entrusted the responsibility of an Imam in order to keep the mosque operating. To questions like: (1) What is the selection procedure of Imams? (2) What are the necessary qualification? (3) What are the job specifications? (4) What is the evaluation procedure? (5) What is the remuneration package? (6) What are their educational and skills development opportunities? (7) Are there any retirement benefits? and to some other questions, the Muslim leadership of Guyana, Trinidad and other territories of the Caribbean told that there was no specific procedure of selection adopted, no necessary qualifications required except that the prospective Imam should know how to lead the prayers, no certain job specifications are determined. These are kept flexible and change from person to person. No definite criterion of evaluation on the performance of Imams has been chalked out. Usually executive members of the mosque find it difficult to point out the shortcomings of the Imams. Some Islamic organizations like Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG), Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and South America (IMG) organize Imam's training programmes of one to two week duration. It was found that majority of the Imams were untrained in Guyana and Trinidad. Sometimes they are ridiculed by the youth

for former's lack of Islamic knowledge. It is also the responsibility of those who appoint Imams or the members of the jamaats to ensure that the Imam is not deficient in Islamic education and skills. Everyday we observe in the business World qualified professionals participating in training programmes. Many of them other than having spent years at universities, attended several short courses and training programmes and are experienced in their fields. If the imams have not undergone specialized courses for Imams, how can they manage the Islamic education, training and development of Muslim children, adults and new Muslims.

The major players in the development of Imams are: (1) the Imam himself; (2) the jamaat; (3) the organization to which the jamaat is associated; (4) other imams and (5) national, regional or International Islamic bodies.

As regards Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, St. Vincent, U.S. Virgin Island, it seems that all the players have failed. The Imams are not taking personal initiatives to develop themselves; the jamaats have not entered the arena of human resource development; and the national, regional and international organizations have made very little effort in this direction.

FUNCTION OF THE JAMAATS

The term jamaat is widely used in the Caribbean in the sense to refer to Muslim men, women and children who reside in a specific area and claim to attend or being members of a particular mosque. The jamaat, except in a few cases is managed by the Imam, president and elected members under certain rules called the constitution.

There are 133 mosques in Guyana and about 80 mosques in Trinidad. Some jamaats do not have a functioning madrasah. in some cases the mosque is opened once per week or not at all. The jamaats are not exclusive communities. The Muslims are neighbours of Christians, Hindus and members of other denominations.

The function of the Jamaat is the collective effort of all concerned represented in an organised manner. Whatever is done by the Imam and the executive council or the shura council is described as the jamaat effort. The function of the Jamaat is the creation of the general Islamic atmosphere among the Muslim formulating their concept of issues, encouraging attendance at mosque, formulating programmes and planning events.

Apart from these points listed, the jamaat functions in a wide sense, taking into consideration all aspects of the society dealing with the Muslims and the non-Muslims. The Caribbean is a plural society and the jamaat must take into consideration the current issues and how the Muslims are affected. If the jamaat can not handle an issue, it can turn to a Muslim organisation. It can also make use of non-Muslims in the process of informing and educating the Muslims, e.g., seminar on AIDS, Casinos, moral turpitude of youth, etc.

The Jamaat is generally concerned with the welfare of the Muslims. It encourages the practice of Islamic teachings, fostering of unity, brotherhood, and to develop a high sense of Islamic awareness and consciousness. This can take the form of lectures, seminars, meetings, workshops, visits and press conferences.

The Jamaat is responsible for the physical aspects of the mosque, its compound, assets and welfare of the Muslims. In this respect it must provide the necessary finance to meet costs of projects, etc., and to account for expenditure. It organises and executes plans to benefit the Muslims and educate the non-Muslims on Islam.

How functional a Jamaat is dependent on those elected to office. Among the executive members of the Jamaat are brothers who may be labourers while the educated ones may not be knowledgeable about Islam or trained to manage the affairs of the Muslims. The brothers who are really qualified have little or no interest in Muslims' affairs and do not wish to be subjected to discipline.

The Jamaat therefore should ensure that dedicated, Islamically conscious and practicing brothers (and sisters) are elected/appointed to manage their affairs. Because no proper attention is given to this aspect, unsuitable persons are appointed to manage their affairs.

The Jamaat then should make a census (updated periodically) of all Muslims in the jamaat. This will be helpful in so many ways. Presently, they are in dire need for qualified persons to manage their affairs. Bad management produces bad results. Because of this bad management Islam gets a bad name. The failures are not those of Islam, but of the Muslims. It is imperative to ensure the members of the jamaat become aware of the plans, programmes, etc. Every effort should be made to get them involved. This will ensure vibrancy of the Muslim community.

ETHNICITY, RACISM AND ISLAM IN THE CARIBBEAN

The colonial powers were the architect of early foundations of the Caribbean social set up. The contemporary Caribbean society can still be seen split into horizontal and vertical sub strata of race, ethnic entities and social classes. It is a pluralist society whose different ethnic groups form separate cultural communities. In the region, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Surinam are the leading examples. Indians and Africans make up the Muslim population of Trinidad and Guyana while Indians and Javanese constitute the Surinamese Muslim population.

Smaller Muslim communities are found in the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Jamaica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Maarten. Except Jamaica Grenada and Barbados, the majority of the Muslims hails from African descent. Many Africans are embracing Islam considering that Christianity was not the religion of their ancestors.

The Muslim communities of Trinidad and Guyana exhibit polarization along ethnic lines. In Trinidad, there are only two African Muslim organizations out of fifteen i.e. Jamaat al Muslimeen and Islamic Resource Society. All other organizations are predominantly Indian. The Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG) has few African Muslim workers who have been found complaining about the racial discrimination with respect to financial assistance and scholarships. In Guyana, the African brothers have organized themselves in Guyana Muslim Mission. This organization has a very small membership as the majority of the Afro-Guyanese Muslims prefer to be distant from the organizational set up of the Muslims⁵. Some prominent Afro Guyanese like Mr. Hamilton Green and Mr. Masood have converted to Islam. Mr. Green, who embraced Islam in the early 1960's, became prime minister of Guyana in 1985 and is now mayor of Georgetown city. he was once the most powerful political leader after President Desmond Hoyte⁶. Mr. Masood is ex-army chief. These distinguished leaders do not find themselves

⁵ My interviews with Afro-Guyanese participants of Fourth Regional Leadership Training Camp in Guyana (1994-95).

⁶ Larry Luxner, "Muslims in the Caribbean" Aramco World Vol. 38, No. 6, November - December 1987, p.7.

comfortable with the Islamic organizations. The Islamic organizations too judge the performance of these gentlemen with their own yardstick of 'practicing' or 'non-practicing' Muslims⁷.

There were few educated Afro Guyanese Muslims in the organizational hierarchy of the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) but they have left the GIT complaining 'bad' and 'discriminatory' behaviour of the latter⁸. The other bigger organizations, Central Islamic Organization of Guyana comprises of total Indian stock. However, Muslims in Jamaica and Grenada comprising of two descents (Indian and African), work hand in hand with each other. In Barbados, new Muslim (Africans) talk about apathetic behaviour of Gajrati (Indian) Muslims⁹. Some African brothers have discussed with this writer the society of educational opportunities, unemployment and discouraging attitude of Indian parents regarding marriages between African Muslim males and East Indian females¹⁰.

Similarly, Indian Muslims are skeptical about African Muslims. They apprehend that Africans are converting to Islam for financial reasons or to take away their daughters¹¹. According to Dr. Mansoor Ibrahim, President General of ASJA, Trinidad, this attitude or apprehension of Indian Muslims, is due to lack of education because a true Islamic spirit warrants racial equality.

Islamic Position on Race and Colour

Questions on race, colour and their link with slavery were raised by the African Muslim audience in almost every Caribbean Muslim community visited by this writer, so it becomes relevant to touch upon the Islamic position on this issue. We must remember that the ultimate Islamic reference and authority is the Quran first and the Prophet's sayings and practices second.

⁷ Interview with Maulvi Aziz, Naib Murshid of GIT on January 20, 1995.

⁸ Interview with Mr. Moosa, ex-Shura Member of GIT on January 11, 1995.

⁹ My interview with Desmond Sabir, Amir of Islamic Teaching centre of Barbados on Dec 28, 1994.

¹⁰ See Situation Report of Barbados, ITCB, 1993, p.5

¹¹ Mansoor Ibrahim, "Islam in Trinidad and Tobago", p. 63.

In the Qur'an there are two verses with direct bearing upon the issue. The first reads: "Among the signs of Allah are the creation of the Heaven and of the Earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents (signs) for men of knowledge"¹². The second verse reads, "O mankind! Lo! We have created you from a male and female, and We have made you into nations and tribes so that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you in the eyes of God is the most pious, for Allah is Knower and Aware"¹³. From these two verses it is obvious that the Qur'anic teachings express no racial or colour prejudice; and more significantly, such prejudice is not even mentioned. In the Qur'an, the question of race and colour is obviously not a burning issue; it is simply the will of Allah (SWT) to have a variety of races and colours stands out as signs of His might. But if it happened that, later on, the question of race and colour became a hot issue among some Muslims, such a social development would not necessarily implicate Islam, but would simply mean that those Muslims have deviated from the true teachings of their religion.

There is, by way of further support, the Hadith that confirms the Islamic principles of equality and universalism. The Prophet (ASW) is reported to have said, "I was sent to the red and the black," an expression meant to embrace the whole mankind. On another occasion, the Prophet (ASW) said, "Obey whoever is put in authority over you, even if he be an Ethiopian slave."¹⁴ On still another occasion, he is reported to have said: "Do not marry women for their beauty, which may destroy them, or for their money, which may corrupt them, but for religion. A slit-nosed black-slave woman, if pious, is preferable."¹⁵ Upon a fourth occasion an Ethiopian came to the Prophet (ASW) and said, "You Arabs, excel us in all, in build, colour, and in the possession of the Prophet (ASW). If I believe, will I be with you in Paradise?" The Prophet answers, "Yes, and in Paradise the whiteness of the Ethiopian will be seen over a stretch of a

¹² Al Qur'an, 30:22

¹³ Ibid. 49:13

¹⁴ Al-Bukhari, Kitab al Ahkam

¹⁵ Ibn Majah, (Cairo: 1952), Vol.1, p.597, Chapter Nikah (6)

thousand years."¹⁶ Does not this suggest that the issue of colour is a question that is relative to our life in this world and that it is not going to exist in the Hereafter? These quotations, to mention only a few, illustrate beyond any doubt, that the pious Islamic viewpoint is free from any racial or colour prejudice. There is no innate superiority of race in Islam, and therefore no bar to racial intermarriage. Thus racial and colour prejudice was a burning issue before Islam, but Islam came to oppose these errors, and here lay the merits of Islamic teachings. It might be true that in practice some Muslims would disregard the pious principles of their religion; but that does not implicate Islam; it only implicates those Muslim practitioners.

On the racial intermarriage issue in the Muslim world, the British historian Arnold Toynbee makes the point clear when he says, "...until nowadays, whites and blacks are intermingled under the aegis of Islam, through the length and breadth of the Indian and African continent. Under this searching test the white Muslims have demonstrated their freedom from racial feeling by the most convincing of all proofs; they have given their daughters to black Muslims in marriage."¹⁷

The story of 'Ubadah ibn al-Samit with the Muqawqis, the Christian functionary of Egypt in the time of the Arab conquest, is again very instructive in proving the attitude of the early Muslims towards colour. "Blackness is not despised among us" was the strong, firm statement that the Muqawqis heard as an answer to his perplexity when he saw the black 'Ubadah as the head of the delegation that came to talk to him. Blackness was then despised in the eyes of the Christian Muqawqis as it was among almost all nations in those times. Islam came to teach them for the first time that "blackness is not despised."¹⁸

¹⁶ Quoted in Bernard Lewis' Race and colour in Islam (N.Y: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970) p.94.

¹⁷ Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), Vol-1, p.226.

¹⁸ Ibn Abdal Hakam, Futuh Misr, ed. C.C. Torrey (New Haven: 1992), p.66.

The spirit of brotherhood, equality, and universalism is well expressed in Islamic rituals, such as praying, giving the Zakat (prescribed minimum of alms) and pilgrimage. The late Malcolm X observed these qualities in Islam and wrote saying, "There were tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. they were of all colours, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and non-white."¹⁹

The foregoing account has shown the real attitude of Islam toward the question of race and colour, a question closely related to slavery in Western memory. In Islam, this association of blackness and Africanism with slavery never took place. In the light of this discussion, it becomes easier now to understand the Islamic attitude toward race and colour.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Islamic training entails a comprehensive process of learning and training, intellectual as well as spiritual and physical. The Islamic personality with an Islamic world view and approach to life is involved in the process of training.

Most of the Caribbean Muslim communities face serious organizational problems. Very few leaders of the Muslim communities know how to apply modern techniques of management and organization in Islamic Da'wah. In order to respond to these problems, such effective training programmes are needed to be organized for the various cadres of Da'wah working, leaders, teachers and new Muslims in which practical aspects are emphasized. The training programmes should focus on the following areas:

- i) to organize Islamic work at local, regional, and national levels.
- ii) to coordinate Islamic work with other Islamic organizations at local, regional and national levels.

¹⁹ The Autobiography of Malcom X with Assistance of Alex Haley, (New York: Grove Press, 1966), pp.338-339, 340.

- iii) to train the participants to organize conferences, seminars, workshops, dialogues, lectures, etc. for dissemination of Islamic Da'wah.
- iv) to educate as how to plan and publish Islamic literature, bulletins, journals, magazines, monologue, reports, etc.

Da'wah Academy, International Islami University, Islamabad has so far organized two regional training programmes in the Caribbean: the first, held in Trinidad, on July 15-August 13, 1991 attended by 37 participants and the second, held in Guyana on December 26, 1994 - January 25, 1995 and attended by 50 participants. These two programmes have been useful. The focus was on maximizing participation and employing problem solving methodologies and techniques and on minimizing lectures. These programmes were attended by the leaders of Muslim organizations and bodies, university students and some new Muslims. A critical evaluation of those two training programmes and of these camps conducted by the IIFSO, WAMY, some regional and local Muslim organizations indicates that much of the contents and themes of these organizations were identical. However, training camps organized in Guyana by one Libyan diplomat; Mr. Ahmad Ihwas had a lasting impact on the Muslim youth of Guyana. The Muslim youth who participated in his camps are outstanding even today. A majority of those participants is among the leadership of the Muslim organizations of the Caribbean and North America. Some of peculiarities of those camps are: strict discipline, presence of practicing scholar(s) among the participants for the whole duration of the camp, presentation of Quranic lectures by a charismatic resource person like Ahmad Ihwas, etc.

Similarly, in Trinidad, two Da'wah leaders, one Mr. Husain Pasha of India and other Mr. Hisham Badram of Jordan were successful in influencing the Muslim youth and children through their training camps. Presently, Islamic Da'wah Movement (IDM) and University of West Indies Islamic Society (UWIIS) conduct courses on Islamic Civilization which have proved to be effective in educating the Muslim youth in Islamic disciplines.

The Da'wah Academy, however, strongly feels the need to further improve its regional training programmes in the Caribbean by diversifying its contents keeping in view the real needs of the Muslim communities of the Caribbean region. The Academy feels that one month duration is too short a period to impart a deep impact and to hope for a major and far-reaching achievements. Obviously a programme, however, carefully designed, cannot cater for every

body's needs or benefit every one equally in a group of such diversities, nor it can fuse such heterogeneous elements into a homogeneous group in only one month.

Apart from financial constraints, there are difficulties in mobilizing suitable resource persons at such appropriate times as may be necessary for maintaining a logical curriculum sequence.

Organizations like Da'wah Academy, WAMY, IIFSO, IMG and others which are involved in Da'wah work in this region should review their existing prototypes of training programmes to achieve the following possible results:

1. To make the participants conscious of the nature, magnitude and importance of the gigantic task and challenge that face the Muslim Ummah, in general, and their communities and themselves in the Caribbean in particular, in the contemporary situation.
2. To inspire the participants to come forward and commit themselves to strive for the fulfillment of this task.
3. To make them realize the need for preparing and developing themselves for the fulfillment of their mission of Da'wah.
4. To make them understand the nature of Islam as the Divine guidance for man's total life, and impart some knowledge about its fundamental and comprehensive teachings.
5. To guide them to acquire further knowledge which would open up ways of self development and improvement.
6. To introduce them to certain basic skills which are essential for effective leadership.
7. To give them a sense of belonging to a large and universal Muslim Ummah and provide them a perspective on its contemporary situation, problems and challenges.

The emphasis in these objectives is on laying down the base for further development rather than merely imparting knowledge. Each participant should then be able to acquire such knowledge and skills as he needs and as are commensurate with his own level of education and understanding.

Training programmes of Da'wah Academy comprised of lectures, workshops, group discussions, Da'wah field work, problem solving during situation reports and learning through group life. Most of the programmes conducted by IIFSO in the Caribbean region were either in the format of workshops or conferences where different position papers were presented.

However, there should remain more emphasis on methods which involve participation and require 'doing' of things or involvement than on listening to lectures. Lecture's period should not take more than 1/4 of the total learning time; no lecture should normally be longer than 50 minutes; and each lecture should be followed by a question-answer and discussion session. There should be adequate free time for self-study, mutual contacts, rest and recreation, sports and games.

Course Work

Following course work is suggested for an effective training programme:

I. Qur'an Studies

1. The syllabus on the Qur'an studies will consist of:
 - (a) One lecture on "How to study the Qur'an and communicate its message".
 - (b) Seven selections from the Qur'an for individual and group studies.
2. A tentative list of seven Qur'an selections proposed for this purpose is given as following:
 - i) Surah al-Hajj 22:77-78
 - ii) Surah al-Baqarah 2:40-47
 - iii) Surah al-Muzammil 73:1-10
 - iv) Surah al-Hujurat 49:10-14
 - v) Surah al-Nur 24:47-52 & 62-64
 - vi) Surah al-Hadid 57:20-25

There will be at least 15 periods for this course of one month.

Methods

The methods of Qur'an study will consist of:

- (a) Self-study
- (b) Preparation for the presentation of the meaning and message of the Qur'anic selection.

- (c) Presentation before a group
- (d) Evaluation by the resource person.

Time may be given within the programme for study and presentation. Two periods will be devoted to each Qur'anic selection. First, one period for each selection in the afternoon preceding the presentation, will be allocated for personal study of the particular selection and preparing notes of one's understanding of its meaning and message.

In the second period designated for each selection, four participants will be called upon to make the presentation of the meaning and message of the same selection. Each will be given 12-15 minutes. Thus each participant, it may be expected, will study and prepare all the seven selections. The procedure would allow 28 participants to make their presentation, but this does not matter very much. The objective is learning and not giving opportunity to everyone. Through listening and observing presentations by others and their critical evaluation by the resource person, even the few non-presenters will learn enough. Listeners may be asked to make their own contributions, if they have something worthwhile and new to say (about 10 minutes). Towards the end, the resource person will review the individual presentation, with regard to their methods of study, contents and styles of presentation. It may be useful to record these presentation on video and play them at sometime. Thus the presenter would be able to hear and see himself, and this programme can be used for additional function as the development of speaking skills.

It is expected that this course will arouse the interest of the participants in studying the Qur'an, will train them in proper methods and approaches to such study in pondering over the meaning and message of the Qur'an, in preparing notes and preparing for group-study on Dars, in communicating the Qur'an. It will lay the foundation for more understanding and better Quranic studies in their groups in their own place.

II. Hadith Studies

Syllabus

The syllabus will consist of:

- (a) One lecture on Hadith, its place, source and a very short introduction of the history of collection and its terminology.

(b) Seven topics for reading, selecting and presenting Hadith are given in the following as an example:

- i) Preparing for '*Dunya*' and *Aakhira*
- ii) *Istighfaar* and *Tawba*
- iii) *Hubb* and *Tawakkul*
- iv) *Shu'ubal Iman* (Iman and its branches)
- v) Love and brotherhood in the way of Allah
- vi) Safeguarding tongue and eschewing evil words
- vii) Kindness

Method

1. Each participant will read suggested source on each particular topic. He will select six ahadith which he finds most instructive and meaningful for himself and his community and write them down in his personal collection. He will present one Hadith before the group when called upon to do so.
2. Again, if selection and instruction are done much in advance, it should be expected that the participants would have completed all the above-mentioned stages before coming to the programme. Rest of the method is same as suggested for Quranic studies. It is expected that this course will help the participants in establishing a deep and lasting contact with the Hadith. They will become acquainted with the sources, will read over a lot of Hadith, will become used to go to the sources and find out what is needed by them and their communities, and will end up with an anthology of at least 40 Hadith collected through their own efforts.

III. Islam as a way of Life

Eight lectures are proposed for this area. Too many lectures are not considered necessary in this area as quite enough readings are available on these topics. All presentations and discussions in the above lectures should deal with only the basic teachings and should relate them with the concerns of the participants.

Islam: The only way

Presentation should cover these points: Man's need of guidance; the Creator as the only source of correct guidance; hence the essentiality of the Divine guidance.

The Prophet and the Book

The institution of prophethood as the source of the Divine guidance, its universality and continuity; Islam as the eternal religion; relationship with the Prophet.

Faith & its Impact on the individual & collective

Faith as confession of truth, as commitment of whole of life to Allah, its impact on life.

IBADAH

Meaning: misunderstandings; comprehensive concept.

Education in Islam

Place and importance; philosophy and purpose; family and other institutions; characteristics and methods.

Women, Family life and Islam

Basic teachings; contemporary challenges

Islamic politics

Basic teaching; major contemporary issues and Islam.

Islamic Economics

Basic teachings; major contemporary issues and Islam.

IV. Comparative Civilization and Religion

Six lectures are proposed in this area. It calls for more attention, and more lectures may be included if the unutilized time is not used for some other more important purpose.

The Secular West

Origin; development; characteristics; impact on the Muslim situation.

Contemporary Ideologies

A brief introduction to humanism, nationalism and socialism, manifestation in the Muslim situation.

What is Christianity

Brief introduction; encounter with the Muslim

What is Buddhism

Brief introduction; encounter with the Muslim.

What is Judaism

Brief introduction; encounter with the Muslim.

What is Hinduism

Brief introduction; encounter with the Muslim.

V. Da'wah and Islamic Movement

Sixteen lectures are proposed in this area.

Islamic Da'wah

Inherent in the nature of Islam; why; in the Qur'an and the Sunnah; misconceptions.

Iman and Jihad

Jihad as the consequence and test of Iman; the concept; why Jihad; establishment of Din misconceptions.

Destiny of the Ummah

Dependence on Da'wah and Jihad; the purpose of the Ummah; pledge; consequences, material or moral.

The Islamic Movement

Definition; why, the logic; the purpose, here and in the hereafter.

The characteristics of an Islamic Movement

Distinguishing features; inner and outward; individual and system; total change and revolution.

Methodology of an Islamic Movement

Distinguishing features; diversity; flexibility, viability.

History of Islamic revival-IHistory of Islamic revival-IIContemporary Movements - IContemporary Movements - IIContemporary Movements - OthersProphet, the ideal Da'iyahHow to do Da'wah

Principles; methods.

How to do Da'wah among non-MuslimsIslamic Movement - Minority Situation

The role of the youth

VI. Tazkiya

Seven lectures are proposed in this area:

Islamic Personality

Basic characteristics

Dunya and Akhirah

Principles and Methods of Tazkiyah

Relationship with Allah

Dhikr

Brotherhood

Importance and basic principles.

Brotherhood

How to protect and develop.

VII. Organization & Organizational Skills

Seven lectures are proposed in this area:

Jama'ah in Islam

Importance, nature, characteristics

Moral and manners with Jama'ah

Moral behaviour essential for the strength of organization.

Effective organization

Definition; how

Leadership

Concept and characteristics

Effective leadership

Planning, Decision - making and communication

Training and developing human resources

VIII. Current Affairs

Five lectures are proposed in this area:

Super-power politics and world problems

America - European power and Muslims

New World order and Muslims

Dictatorships in Muslim countries

Muslim minorities

IX. Skills

Four lectures are proposed in this area. These are in addition to four lectures on (a) How to study the Qur'an, followed by seven practice sessions, (b) How to read Hadith, followed by seven practice sessions, (c) How to conduct and lead meetings and discussion, followed by seven practice sessions. They all fall in this area, but for convenience sake has been grouped separately.

The Art of problem solving

The Art of writing

How to organize conventions, seminars

Peaceful resistance and how to organize it.

X. Workshops

Workshops are intended to produce concrete, feasible answers to definite questions and problems. Hence haphazard discussions on vague, wide-ranging topics is to be avoided.

Training through workshops aims to develop skills for

- (a) group discussion
- (b) problem solving and
- (c) creative thinking

Hence issues and problems should be given in the form of questions, and tasks should be precisely stated.

Workshops discussion should be preceded by a 10 minute brainstorming interval, in which each participant should write down as many solutions/proposals as he can think of.

XI. Situation Reports

Situation report is a very useful item of the programmes conducted by Da'wah Academy in the Caribbean. It can be used to a greater advantage if instructions are issued in advance and free improvements are made.

The participants should be asked to come with prepared reports. They may even be asked to send the report in advance, and submission of such report may be used as one condition for admission to the programme.

The report should consist of three main elements:

- a. Basic data
- b. Overall Muslim situation
- c. Particular organization's situation

A format may be given for preparing such reports to elicit useful information, avoid irrelevant information, and to introduce some uniformity.

One added feature which could tremendously increase the value of the programme would be to ask to bring a 5 year action plan for Da'wah work.

XII. General matters

The successful implementation of the training programme would call for some resource persons who should stay with the trainees and guide the Qur'an, Hadith, Workshop and situation report programmes. This aspect was taken care in the situation of Guyana by Mr. Ahmad Ihwas.

Also required will be special resource persons for courses on organization as IIFSO has been doing in the Caribbean. Dr. Omar Hasan Kasule is of the view that some resource persons by the sheer weight of their personality will make an impact on the trainees and leave some lasting impression, on whatever subject they speak. Their usefulness cannot be denied. But as far as possible, topics and subjects should not be followed according to the convenience of the resource persons.

The programme, thus calls for an equal amount of active participation on the part of the trainers.

XIII. SOME SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR WORKSHOP

(A) Given three concrete, feasible and new proposals on:

1. How to make a mosque more effective in leading the community to a better Islamic life.
2. How to make a mosque more effective for Da'wah among non-Muslims
3. How to use politics in a non-Muslim country for the benefit of Muslims
4. How to involve the youth in the Da'wah work

5. How to protect the youth from alien, dominant cultures
6. How to do more effective Da'wah among non-Muslims
7. How to reduce/neutralize sectarianism
8. How to face a hostile non-Muslim regime
9. How to face a hostile Muslim regime
10. How to expand financial resources
11. How to make a meeting more effective
12. How to improve interpersonal relations

Many more topics can be pickéd up from the existing programmes and given a concrete question-form.

(B) Chalk-out a plan for:

- a. A public meeting
- b. A one-day training programme
- c. A Da'wah campaign

(C) Prepare 5 year action plan for Islamic work in your locality/organization/community.

Indoor games, tours and field visits must be sandwiched in the training programmes so that the participants maintain their interest in the activities. Evaluation of each and every activity of the programme will improve the quality of the programme.

Evaluation

It is preferable if the training programme is evaluated by the participants and organizers regularly on daily basis. This evaluation meeting may be held as the last activity of the day in which day long performance; including prayers, conduct of sessions, observance of discipline, presentation of lectures and operation of workshops may be appraised critically. An overall evaluation must be made at the end of the programme.

PRIORITIES OF DA'WAH WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN

Da'wah work by its nature is comprehensive. It includes all aspects of human life and activities. However, it is not possible to present and implement the whole of Islam with all its

dimensions for once and for all. Da'wah work requires wisdom and patience. One may note that whenever the Quran talks about Muslim's duty of Da'wah it advises its followers to carry it out with perseverance and patience.

"And who is better in speech than one who calls towards Allah and works righteousness and says, I am of those who bow in Islam? Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel with what is better; then will the hatred between whom and you was hatred become as it were your friend and intimate. And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint...."²⁰. Luqman said to his son: "O my son, establish regular prayer, enjoying what is good and forbid what is evil and bear with patience whatever happens to you....."²¹. Also: "By the Time, surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous deeds and join each other in mutual teaching of truth and of patience"²²

Determining priorities in Da'wah work are logical and crucial for the Islamic movements and organizations. Da'wah workers should phase out priorities for their projects and plans. In the setting up of priorities it is important to consider the socio-economic and political conditions of the lands where Dawah work is proposed to be done. One must keep in mind the attitude of the people of that land to religion in general and if they had any relations with Islam then it is also important to know their attitudes towards Islam in particular. Before discussing the priorities in the Caribbean countries, let us see the nature of these societies.

Societies in the Caribbean are generally democratic which try to resolve their differences through peaceful negotiations and discussions. They allow freedom of expression, freedom of movement and organization. Everyone is free to believe and express what he or she wants as long as it does not go against the interest of the society and country.

²⁰ Al-Quran 41:33-55.

²¹ Al Quran 31:17

²² Al-Quran : 103

Most of the Caribbean societies are educated. The educational level is generally high. There are considerably developed educational institutions which do not only serve the people of the land but they also attract a considerable number of students from other parts of the world.

The Caribbean societies are in serious moral crisis at this time. The level of morality is degenerating. The drugs, adultery, fornication, homo-sexuality, rapes, abandonment and cruelty to children, murder, violence, etc. are very common in these societies. Like Western societies, we also see in the Caribbean society that families are breaking apart. Sexually transmitted diseases (AIDS, etc.) are also on the rise.

Misconceptions about Islam and Muslims abound in the Caribbean societies. There are constant publications inspiring the fear of Islam and Muslims and hate towards them in the minds and souls of the Caribbean people. Western print media is busy portraying Muslims as terrorists, fanatics and fundamentalist. All these circumstances, suggest that the Muslim communities of the Caribbean must set up their priorities.

It is the duty of Muslim thinkers and planners to direct Muslim Communities to recognize the importance of their presence in this remote part of the world. We must make sure that Islam is not only protected and preserved in these territories but it is also promoted and established. Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqui, Director Islamic Society of Orange Country, Los Angeles, California, in one of his articles advises that Muslims should give priority to two areas while doing Islamic work in the west:

1. Protection and preservation of the Muslim Communities and then future generations.
2. Removal of the prejudices and promotion of the Islamic message among the indigenous people.²³

In order to protect themselves spiritually and morally and to protect their future generations from disintegration and loss of Islamic identity, they must establish good Islamic institution.²⁴

²³ Muzammil H. Siddiqui, Priorities of Islamic Work in the West Dawah Highlights, Issue II/III (Pakistan: Islamabad, Feb/March 1996) p.10

²⁴ Ibid., p.11-12.

While determining the priorities among Islamic Institutions, Masjid should be accorded as the first and the foremost position because Masjid has a significant and extensive role in the life of Muslim Community. Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqui regards home and masjid only two Islamic institution available to Muslims in the West. He writes, "If Muslims do not have an Islamic home and have not organized proper Masjid, they will not be able to find Islam anywhere around them."²⁵

Muslims should make optimum utilization of Masjid. The Masjid must be kept away from personal, ethnic and nationalistic politics. Masjid should remain as the House of Allah. Masjid should be attended with utmost respect, dignity and feelings of brotherhood for all Muslims. The believers should come to the Masjid with an intent to wash their sins away, to increase virtues and goodness, and not to perform any act that may jeopardize your objective and to invite the wrath of Allah upon them.

Muslims in the jamaat must select righteous and capable imams who serve the community with consultation and sincerity and who are willing to cooperate with all people without any distinction of race, nationality or ethnic background. There are many benefits which Muslims can derive from a Masjid. Masjid provides clean and calm atmosphere for worship, a venue for education and training of children, men and women. Masjid normally have maktabas or madrasa attached to them. The Jamaats should arrange good Islamic library for books, periodicals, audio and video materials.

There should be an arrangement related to marriages and funerals. Masjid should also have family counselling service in the cases of disputes among the spouses or problems among other family members. In cases of disputes among Muslims, mosques should provide Islamic arbitration to resolve the problems.

Masjid should also be utilized for those Muslims who are homeless, jobless, sick or those who encounter sudden physical, physiological, financial or legal problems.

Jamaats should devise such policies to use the mosques for fostering strong and active women groups to help Muslim sisters in their Islamic life and growth. Dr. Siddiqui writes, "Women must have full participation in the masjid and must not be excluded from the activities.

²⁵

Ibid., p.12.

They should be constantly reminded to observe their Islamic dress, and proper Islamic etiquettes, and separation between men and women must be observed."²⁶

Some educational programmes should be developed for the new Muslims as to involve and absorb them in the community. The consultative committees of the masajid should seek the help of qualified Muslims wherever they are available. Personal liking and disliking with respect to choosing a qualified person should be set aside. Masajid, besides being the places of worship and education should also work for the economic betterment and welfare of the Muslim Community.

While getting all these benefits from the masjid, Muslims must advance regular donations on monthly basis. They should consider the development of local masjid and maktab as part of the family budget. Muslims usually depend on foreign organizations for funding and development. This tendency should not get wider currency.

Islamic Education

Islam is a faith and a way of life, a social order and social movement. All those who are committed to this faith are expected to live in accordance to its principles and strive to make a better world by enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.²⁷ Education is the first step in the process of creating a better understanding of the world and the role of the Muslims. Education and excellence in Education must remain the top priority of Muslims. Islamic education of our young generations is very important to protect them from disintegration and from losing their identity and their faith. Western society is very attractive because of its glamour, material temptations and loose or unrestricted morality. If Muslims are not careful, they shall soon lose their whole generation.

Except Trinidad and Tobago, Muslim in the Caribbean (especially in Guyana) have been many slow in establishing Islamic schools. In many territories of the Caribbean, Muslims think that they are unable to establish academic institutions better than the Christians. There is also the cost factor. In fact, Muslims are in dire need of their own schools and institutions to prepare

²⁶ Ibid., p. 14

²⁷ Al Quran, 3:110

a generation according to their values and traditions. Islamic education is not only imparting of information, it is also moral and spiritual training (tarbiyah).

The Islamic schools must be of the highest educational standard and they should also provide an atmosphere of moral and spiritual growth of the Muslim personality. Muslim boys and girls should be encouraged to attend these schools. Education of our young generation is not only the duty of the parents, it is also the duty of the Ummah. Muslims must contribute generously for these institutions, so that all children of all economic levels can benefit from Islamic education.

There is also need to develop teachers training programs. Muslim youth, both males and females, should be encouraged to go in the field of education. We also need Islamic colleges and seminaries to train Islamic scholars. Muslims in Trinidad have indigenous Imams, teachers and Dawah workers. Some of them are sponsored by Darul Ifta, Saudi Arabia and some by Rabita. The Muslim Community does not have qualified Imams and teachers. Gayana Islam Trust is running Gayana Islamic Institute (G.I.I.) but none of their teachers carry masters degree. All are B.A. or equivalent to B.A. The Muslim community of Barbados is the richest one in the Caribbean in respect of qualified Islamic teachers and qaaris. There are two madrassas established by Jamiat-ul-Ulama of Barbados. Jamaican Muslims are not self sufficient in religious teachers. They send their students to Darul uloom Trinidad and Guyana Islamic Institute but rate of their graduation has been very slow. Two teachers are sponsored. They busy themselves in conducting Quran classes and Fiqh classes. The growing Muslim community's requirements are increasing especially in the field of trained duat and teachers. St. Vincent needs a permanent Imam. Grenadian Muslims are also in need of a qualified Imam. However, there is a need of indigenous duat and religious teachers everywhere in the Caribbean. The Muslim communities can not live for ever on imported scholars and teachers from abroad.

The Islamic organizations should avoid conflict with the regimes. The Jamaats and institutions should try to work within the constitutional limits and should avoid the language of power politics. Our basic purpose should be to protect our human rights, the freedom of life, property, honour, observance and propagation of our religion.

Dawah among the Caribbean People

Islam is primarily a Dawah oriented message. Its success as a living force in the life of the Muslims depends on a continuous progressive and dynamic self expansion. So, it is the duty of Muslims to convey the message of Allah to the people with wisdom and knowledge, among whom they are living. The whole humanity needs Islam especially the Caribbean society which has now become the hub of promiscuous activity due to the visits of the Western tourists.

CO-ORDINATION IN DAWAH WORK

We find the growth of a vast spectrum of organizations and institutions pursuing a wide variety of agenda and providing multifarious services to the Muslim communities. We also find smaller organizations which exist side by side with the mainstream organizations but their existence was either due to their expression of dissatisfaction with the bigger organizations or for the promotion of their ideological principles, their own vision of Islamic work which, in most cases, could not be promoted or achieved through bigger organizations.

It has been observed that bigger and smaller organizations, in most of the cases, pursue the same objectives and programmes but they do not feel necessity to consult, co-operate or co-ordinate the activities which in turn results in loss of energies and resources of the Islamic organizations and also duplication of efforts.

Need for Co-ordination

Islamic work and the Muslim community development in the Caribbean has reached a level where a co-ordination effort is imperative. Though there have been few scattered efforts by Muslim World League (MWL) and the Da'wah Academy of Islamabad, Pakistan, but no consistent endeavour so far has been made to co-ordinate organizations and their activities, at local, regional and national levels. The reasons for the lack of effort are many. Some of them are as follows:

- The trend of co-ordination is new and the leaders of the organizations are too busy in their own activities to see what is happening in other areas.
- Effort of co-ordination requires full-time workers and sufficient financial resources; few individuals or organizations, at present, are capable of that.
- Some organizations, pursuing similar purposes, sometimes exhibit rivalry which hampers smooth working relationships and meaningful inter organization contact.

- Muslims of the Caribbean have yet to learn the art of working together and developing an institutional framework. Very often, an organization represents the extension of its founder's person rather than the ideas represented by a team of workers and governed by a set of rules. This, of course, results in conflicts of personalities.
- Some organizations represent a particular school of thought which precludes them from associating with other organizations or accepting fresh ideas.

Whatever the reasons may be for the lack of co-ordination among the Muslim organizations in the Caribbean, it is time to delineate an effective strategy of co-ordination in Da'wah activities. Training of new Muslims, printing of Islamic literature, preparation of syllabi for primary and secondary schools, 'Idain (the two Ids) functions and moon sighting in Ramadan are some areas of mutual co-operation and co-ordination. However, co-ordination in Islamic activities does not restrict healthy competition to achieve the excellence.

In 1957, some efforts were made in Trinidad to instil co-operation and co-ordination among older Muslim organizations i.e. ASJA, TIA, TML and the IMG but this move was unsuccessful²⁸. As a result of efforts in 1980, Muslim Co-ordinating Council (MCC) came into being. This is a consultative body under the motto of "co-operate with one another in good deeds and virtue".

The United Islamic Organizations (UIO) was established in March 1990 as a result of the Rabita Conference in Trinidad in 1989. This consists of 13 Muslim Organizations. Efforts are afoot to organize a common forum of MCC and UIO. They have held three meetings to weigh pros and cons of evolving a consultative body consisting of representatives of both the bodies. In Guyana, in January, 1995, discussion generated by Dr. Ali Kettain on co-ordination between the Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG) and the Gyana Islamic Trust (GIT) culminated in signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the leadership of these two rival organizations.

In keeping with the Islamic teachings we must develop a rational approach, show respect for other peoples' ideas and personal integrity and be flexible to accept or adapt to new ideas,

²⁸

Amina Baksh, An Examination of Muslim Organization p. 42.

if convinced. We need to evolve both local and regional Shura which must include communities, ethnic groups, professionals, women and youth. And finally if we can not achieve consensus on some issues we should respect diversity and allow for healthy competition among individuals, groups and organizations. "And compete in achieving good"²⁹.

CONCLUSION

The institutions of mosques, maktabas, madrassas, imams and jamaats are playing a significant role in education and training of the members of the Muslim communities. However, mosque is not properly utilized as multiple complex. This is partially due to the pre-conceived idea that mosques are only worship places. Imams in the Caribbean are not properly educated and trained. Jamaats are a well organized units and yet under utilized. Some Muslim communities in Trinidad, Guyana and Barbados pursue ethnic approach which is contrary to the teachings of Islam. These Muslim communities do not have proper training in Islamic disciplines. A programme of Islamic training has been chalked out keeping in view the requirements of the Caribbean Muslim communities. Da'wah is basically an organized discipline. It requires wisdom and patience. It can not be done without first determining the priorities. Lastly, co-ordination in Dawah activities is the need of the hour. Through co-ordination in plans and programmes, physical and material resources of the Muslims may be wisely saved. We should co-ordinate our efforts, tap all possible resources, co-operate with each other in achieving common objectives and permit healthy competition where consensus is not possible. Such should be the spirit of Islamic work in the Caribbean.

²⁹

Al-Qur'an 5:51.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the present study of the Islamic institutions and Da'wah organizations, some recommendations have been formulated for the consideration of local and international organizations. This researcher believes that if these recommendations are considered for implementation, Da'wah work will progress in the region qualitatively and quantitatively.

1. Islamic organizations and institutions of the Caribbean should accord priority to protection and preservation of the Muslim communities and their future generations from the cultural influences of other non Islamic communities. They should plan to remove the prejudices and propagate the Islamic message among the indigenous people. In order to protect the Muslims morally, spiritually and culturally and to protect their future generations from moral decadence and loss of Islamic identity, efforts should be made to establish effective Islamic institutions like Islamic schools, kindergartens and Islamic centres.
2. The institution of mosque should be optimally utilized by Muslims. It must be kept away from personal, ethnic and nationalistic politics.
3. The institution of Jamaat can be activated to select righteous and capable imams who serve the community with consultation and who are willing to co-operate with all the Muslims without any distinction of race, nationality or ethnic background.
4. The Islamic organizations can make sure that Mosque has a family counseling service in the cases of disputes among the spouses or problems among other family members. In case of disputes among Muslims, mosques should provide Islamic arbitration to resolve the problems.
5. Jamaats should formulate such policies to use the mosques for fostering strong and active women groups to help Muslim women in strengthening their Islamic practices and growth. They should be constantly reminded to observe their modesty and observance of separation between men and women.
6. Da'wah programs should be developed to attract non-Muslims to Islam. If people embrace Islam, some training and educational programs should be developed for them as to involve and absorb them in the Muslim community.

7. Islamic organizations like Rabita, WAMY, IIFSO and AICCLA should not limit their support to 'like minded' organizations only but should make an effort to help all Islamic organizations irrespective of consideration of fiqh, maslak, political or ethnic background.
8. International organizations should prepare an integrated training syllabi for all the Da'wah institutions and organizations in the Caribbean.
9. These organizations should provide guidance to Islamic schools, colleges maktabas and madrassas as how to achieve the best results and the organizational where withal.
10. They should extend information through their journals and magazines on issues and problems facing the Muslim Ummah.
11. The international bodies may plan to provide reasonable resources to make Da'wah workers self sufficient rather to engender a parasitic mentality and dependence. They should generate funds through endowments and halal investments for economic security and self-sufficiency of the Islamic workers.
12. They should encourage efforts to unite the Muslims. Such a mechanism should be evolved through which real unity is achieved by the organizations in the field and not by artificial means.
13. These international organizations should open model Islamic schools and institutions in the communities of the Caribbean so that other Muslim institutions emulate and learn from them and improve upon their standard of teaching and training.
14. Only those Da'wah workers (missionaries) be sent to the Caribbean Muslim communities who are not strong adherents of one or another fiqhi school. This create myriad of problems and causes disunity among Muslims and earns bad name for the sponsor organizations.
15. Da'wah workers or missionaries should be paid on time. Sometimes, undue delays in payments embitter the Da'wah missionaries. This gives rise to jittery in their attitude and response towards the members of the Muslim community.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

In the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago is considered to be the hub of Islamic activities. There are about twenty Muslim organizations which are involved in Islamic work at varying levels. The Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association (ASJA) has worked very hard to neutralize the Qadiani's efforts to infiltrate the Islamic bodies of Trinidad. Schools and colleges of ASJA have been successful to an appreciable extent in generating Islamic consciousness among the Trinidadian Muslims. Establishment of the Islamic Missionaries Guild was a turning point in the history of the Caribbean. With its inception, Islam travelled to other Caribbean territories through visits of scholars, despatch of Islamic literature and establishment of the branches of the Guild. Later, the Guild established relations with international organizations and, as a result, the Caribbean Muslims were connected internationally. Scholars from the Middle east, Indo Pak subcontinent and North America visited the Caribbean and a wave of Islamic reawakening was set in motion. Many Islamic organizations, such as Islamic Trust, Jamaat-al Muslimeen, Islamic Dawah Movement (IDM) and Iqra Productions were established as result of the activities of the Guild. These activities included organizing of radio programmes, bringing out of "Torch of Islam", winning new converts to Islam and their training, organizing of training camps for the Muslim youth and children. These activities have produced a number of competent and eminent Da'wah workers who later founded either their own bodies or associated themselves to already existing organizations. All these bodies and organizations which emerged as a result of the Guild's activities presently exhibit a trend of Islamic resurgence. These organizations are Islamic Da'wah Movement (IDM), University of the West Indies Islamic Society (UWIIS), Iqra Productions, Islamic Research and Resource Society, Jamaat al Muslimeen, and Muslim Credit Union (M.C.U.). Recently, United Islamic Organizations (UIO) has been founded which includes thirteen organizations. All of these organizations; either service bodies or educational institutions, manifestly exhibit the trend of Islamic revival. Although the Darul Uloom Trinidad is run by traditional Ulama but the graduates of the Darul uloom are contributing towards the Islamic revival in the Caribbean. The Islamic Academy also shows the resurgent trend. All these organizations pursue an active Da'wah strategy to invite Muslims and non-Muslims to Islam.

These organizations make efforts to improve individual's religiosity by persuading him to attend the mosque, the training programmes for his personal improvements and to study Islamic literature. They are actively persuading to transform the society into an Islamic society ultimately. The older organizations of Trinidad like Anjuman Sunnatul Jammal Association (ASJA) and Trinidad Muslim League (TML) are pursuing an approach of maintaining and retaining the Islamic culture through building and running mosques, maktabas, madrassas, schools and colleges. Their work in the field of new Muslims is negligible. Although these organizations have been working diligently to increase the population's awareness of Islam.

Largely, as a reaction to the religio-cultural pressures of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and westernized society, some Muslims have adopted the defensive approach of 'protecting' Islam instead of propagating it, while the majority has preferred to remain indifferent. This attitude of majority is due to lack of Islamic knowledge and ignorance of needs and requirements of Islam and of the duties and responsibilities as a Muslim. Secondly, Intra and inter group squabbling have overshadowed the fraternity of the Muslim community of Trinidad from the beginning of the Islamic organizations in this island. Customs of doubtful authenticity have usually replaced the mandatory practices of Islam and trivial matters are vigorously debated and crucial issues of national and international importance are left unnoticed.

Old Islamic bodies of Trinidad have not performed the true role as Da'wah organizations. The workers as well as the leadership of these organizations are obsessed with partisan approach which has dominated their methodology in Da'wah work. This has caused development of bureaucratic opposition (within the organization) to enlightenment and reform.

Thus instead of working as a parallel ideological movements concerned with achieving the same objectives, they have in fact, worked as rival organizations and institutions. Also, the activities of these older organizations have mostly been designed and revolve around the glorification of past achievements rather than excelling in present and planning for the future.

These traditional organizations have undoubtedly contributed to keeping Islam alive and to increase the population's consciousness of its values mainly through educational institutions. However, their performance fall far short of their potential. The gap between the potential and the actual performance is due to a relative deficiency of practical skills in leadership and management.

In Guyana, the Central Islamic organization of Guyana (CIOG) and Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) are two competitive Islamic organizations which have been successful to a considerable extent in influencing the Muslim community through their social, educational, and other community oriented programmes.

The CIOG's Social Welfare Programme is vibrant body which caters to needy cases including the poverty stricken and elderly, orphans, and assistance to tertiary students. Their efforts are directed towards poor's relief and improvement in the living conditions of Guyanese Muslims through collection and distribution of Zakat. The CIOG needs to broaden its area of activity to the African people as well. Conducting the Quran classes and Arabic Classes is not enough. There is a desperate need of Guyanese Muslims that a college be established in Georgetown where the Muslim students may learn Islamic and secular subjects. Presently there are very few Muslim students studying at the University of Guyana. The Muslims lag far behind in higher education.

The other significant organization, Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) is involved in appreciable Da'wah work among the Muslim youth, Afro-Guyanese and the new Muslims. The GIT needs to institutionalize its work among the women also. It has a team of devoted Muslim youth. Improvement in worker's education should be accorded priority while making long term planning. Performance of its educational wing, the Guyana Islamic Institute (GII) needs improvement in area of skilled and qualified academic staff. The GIT should consider to revive its one year long "Intensive Islamic Tarbiyah Course" which was once very useful in producing a motivated generation of the Caribbean Muslims in the eighties. Islamic institutions like mosques, maktabas, and madrassas are growing at a considerable pace and influencing the Muslim communities in increasing their Islamic ambience. Their growth is more appreciable in Guyana than in Trinidad. Institution of Jamaat is also stronger in Guyana than anywhere else in the Caribbean. Muslims in Barbados are making fairly good progress in the field of education. Co-ordination between the Islamic Teaching Centre and the other two jamaats is badly needed to co-ordinate Da'wah work. Gujrati Muslims should provide resources for the education of new Muslims so that the impression that Islam is an "Indian religion" may be neutralized. Afro Barbadians are converting to Islam but they require proper Islamic orientation for which there is no local institution. Gujrati Muslims teach their children in the Darul Uloom either in Urdu

or in Gujrati. Training camps for the new Muslims may be organized by the Islamic Teaching Centre of Barbados to teach them the fundamentals of Islam.

The Muslim community of Jamaica is very poor but organized and united. New Muslims are more active than the east Indian Muslims. The Islamic Council of Jamaica (ICJ) has embarked upon a plan of propagating Islamic message at the grass root level. The Muslim community of Jamaica is very consistent in strengthening Da'wah work through organizing Islamic studies classes in the government run schools and mosque-based Islamic activities. Bahamian Muslims have dynamic leadership but they lack in a vibrant community. There are prospects of increase in Muslim population if the Jamaat ul Islam delineates an effective plan of action to reach the non-Muslim population of Bahamas.

The Muslim communities of Dominica, Belize, Bermuda, Antigua, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, and Montserrat are very small. They are developing their Islamic institutions slowly and steadily. However, every Muslim community has established mosques and Islamic Centres where at least Quran classes are conducted for the Muslim children. There is a need for a regional organization which may extend co-operation to these smaller Muslim communities and support their activities. They need basic Islamic literature for their members, and the non-Muslims in their surroundings.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF ARABIC AND LOCAL TERMS

Adhan	Call to (five daily) prayers.
Aakhirah	The Hereafter.
Dhuhr	Mid-afternoon prayer, being the third of the five daily prayers.
Dunya	World; worldly life.
Fajar	Early morning prayer - after dawn. This is the first of the five daily prayers.
Fard	Obligatory.
Fiqh	Jurisprudence.
Hadith	Reported traditions of the Prophet (ASW).
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Makka (Haji: one who has been on the pilgrimage).
Halal	Permitted, e.g. halal food.
Haram	Prohibited, e.g. haram meat.
Hifz	To memorise the Qur'an.
Ibadah	Worship in a ritual sense, but all good actions are an act of worship.
Id al-Adha	Festival of sacrifice celebrated by Muslims who do not go for hajj or pilgrimage to Makkah.
Id al-Fitr	Festival of breaking the fast celebrated at the end of Ramadan on the first day of the Islamic month, Shawwal.
Iftar	Breaking the fast after sunset.
Imam	The person who leads the prayer: a religious leader.
Isha	Evening prayer -- usually recommended before midnight, being the last of the five daily prayers.
Islam	The word in Arabic derived from the root SLM and denotes submission and peace.
Jama'ah	Congregational prayer.

Jihad	To struggle and strive for Islam - it is both an internal and external struggle .
Jum'ah	Friday.
Salatul Jum'ah	Friday congregational prayer.
Ka'aba	The House of Allah - focal point in Makkah towards which all Muslims turn for prayer.
Khalifah	God's representative on earth (an honour given to man by God); the Caliph or head of the Muslim government.
Maghrib	Prayer just after sunset, being the fourth of the five prayers.
Mahr	A nuptain gift paid by the husband to the wife. It is a compulsory part of the marriage contract and an exclusive property of the wife.
Makruh	Not actually forbidden by Islamic practice but strongly discouraged.
Qari	A reciter of the Qur'an (who usually reads the Qur'an in a melodious voice with proper rules of <i>al-Tajwid</i> (the science of recitation of the Qur'an).
Qiblah	The direction towards which Muslims face in their prayers.
Ramadan	The Muslims' sacred month of fasting, the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.
Rasul	Messenger -- Rasulallah -- Messenger of Allah.
Risalah	The Prophethood, beginning with Adam and finalised by Muhammad(ASW).
Sadaqah al Fitr	The money paid to the needy before 'Id al-Fitr by those who can afford, to enable the poor to participate in 'Id festivities.
Salah	Ritual prayer.
Sawm	Fasting -- particularly in Ramadan, but recommended at other times as well.
Shahadah	Testimony -- declaration of belief in the Oneness of Allah (<i>Tawhid</i>).

Shalwar	Trousers usually used by Pakistani/Indian Muslim women.
Shariah	Islamic law contained within the Qur'an and the <i>Sunnah</i> .
<i>Sunnah</i>	The reported traditions and sayings of the Prophet (ASW).
Tarawih	Special night prayers during the month of Ramadan.
Tawhid	Unity - the basic concept of Islamic teachings - Oneness of Allah.
Tayammum	The symbolic purification before prayer when running water is not available.
Umrah	Lesser Pilgrimage. Can be performed any time other than the days of Hajj.
Wajib	Expressly enjoined.
Wudu	Ritual washing (purification) before prayers.
Zakah/Zakat	Welfare due, given annually to the poor and distressed.
Ahlul Sunnah wal Jamaah	Followers of the Quran and Sunnah as was understood and practised by the Prophet(ASW) and his Companions.
Alim	Islamic Scholar (male)
Alimah	Islamic Scholar (female)
Amir	Leader, head of State, religious leader.
Da'wah	Spreading the word of Allah, missionary work.
Dhikr	Remembrance of Allah.
Dua	Supplication.
Gasht	Visiting Muslim homes.
Hafiz	One who has memorised the whole Qur'an.
Haram	All things forbidden in Islam.
Iftar	Meal at the breaking of the Fast.
Jamaat	Branches, localised sections of the community.
Jahiliyyah	Ignorance, un-Islamic influence or surroundings.
Kafir	Unbeliever
Khutbah	Sermon
Liqaat	Meetings
Majlish Ash Shura	Consultative body of an organization.

Maktab	Equivalent to a Sunday School. Religious school organized in a mosque or residence.
Moulood	Functions where the singing of Urdu songs and Quranic recitation are performed.
Mufti	Islamic scholar who gives verdict.
Riba	Usury, interest.
Shirk	Islamic law enshrined in the Qur'an and Hadith.
Ummah	Universal Muslim Brotherhood, Muslim Community.
Wudu	Ablution.

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